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THE WONDERS

OF

THE WEST INDIES.

BY

MRS. HENRY LYNCH.

AUTHOR OF "MILLIE HOWARD," "THE RED BRICK HOUSE," "CONVERSATIONS ON THE PARABLES," &c.

SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET;
AND B. SEELEY, HANOVER STREET,
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PREFACE

BY THE

RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF JAMAICA.

In an age of more than Athenian curiosity, an age in which authors and readers are alike intent on "telling or hearing some new thing," it is remarkable that of a field so distinguished by novelty, and so exuberant in beauty, as that afforded by the scenery of the West Indies, very little has been investigated and less made known.

While the pencil of the artist and the pen of the tourist have, year after year, brought vividly to the public eye the most striking features of countries far less beautiful and sublime, the "Wonders of the West Indies" have been, like the lofty peaks of their enchanting islands, shrouded in their native mist, or have at best had

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no prominence in our literature, because, like the anti-Agamemnonian heroes, they wanted the "poetic chronicle," which it is the design of the following pages to supply.

Nor when I consider the ample materials for this work, and the qualifications of the Authoress, can I fear that it has failed in its execution, or that it will be found to reveal less matter for the admiration of the reader than its title, however seemingly ambitious, would imply.

If the history of the Antilles is associated with no classical reminiscences—if the ideas which that history suggests are still darkened by the deep shadows of a great though not wholly unexpiated national crime, and connected with the rise and fall of fortunes, in some instances iniquitously made and ingloriously expended, and if even its more romantic story turns chiefly on the exploits of the Buccaneer and the Pirate, not forgetting, however, the never-failing bravery of the naval heroes, under the "meteor flag of England," by whom they were exterminated;—it cannot be denied, that the natural endowments of these magnificent islands are of a character to com-

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mand the admiration of every beholder, and to afford a theme which the most eloquent description could scarcely surpass.

In traversing the broad savannahs and climbing the mountain-passes of Jamaica,—in fording the glittering rivers which illuminate its retired valleys clothed in the perpetual verdure of the Tropics—in penetrating those deep recesses which realize the glorious solitude,

> "Where the lone Owl on pinions grey
> Breathes from the rustling boughs,
> And down the lone vale sails away
> To more profound repose;"

I have often felt that the recollections of a long life of travel and observation could supply no worthier topic for painter or for poet than these scenes, in which I would now leave the reader to the luxury of thought, and to the spirit of pious astonishment which they will undoubtedly inspire, and in which the mind may be recreated and linger with instruction and delight.

AUBREY G. JAMAICA.

LONDON, 1856.

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THE

WONDERS OF THE WEST INDIES.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

It is not surprising, that to the vast continent of America was given the name of the New World, for as one approaches the West India Islands the whole face of nature wears a novel aspect.

The winds apparently no longer blow whither they list, but, compelled by a gentle and invisible agency, waft the vessel pleasantly onward to the haven where it would be. For weeks, for months, it blows with very little variation from the same quarter. The sails are filled, and happy is the seaman's path across the ocean when under the influence of this propitious breeze.

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Then the flying-fish arrest the attention, soaring for a moment or two from the billows, as if to catch the sunbeams, and bear them down into the waters.

How magnificent and peculiar are the mountains! In some parts girdled with forests, in others craggy, and appearing like petrified billows.

If so much be visible from the deep, the traveller, on landing, is inclined to feel he must stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.

What is the oak-tree of our England when compared with the cedar or mahogany; the gigantic cotton-tree, whose very stem has produced a boat capable of containing more than a hundred persons; or the wild fig-tree, in itself almost a forest, of which Milton thus writes:—

> "The Fig-tree, not that kind for fruit renowned,
> But such as at this day to Indians known,
> In Malabar or Deccan spreads her arms,
> Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
> The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
> About the mother-tree a pillared shade,
> High over-arched and echoing walks between."

Birds, flowers, insects, all are strangers to us. The brilliant humming-bird, whose wings are as

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if dyed with molten emerald and amethyst, with touches of ruby light between, softened and made exquisitely lovely by the transparent veil of gold in which the tiny creature, in size not larger than a beetle, seems to be enveloped, flits from wild flower to tree, the beautiful connecting link between the insect and the feathered tribe.

The tropical dews, resting like heavy rain on the morning world, borrow from the sunrise a brightness to which words cannot do justice. The mountains stand forth arrayed in diamonds to do homage to the waking day, whilst the humblest flower holds the crystal treasure in its tiny cell as meet offering for the morning. Every separate blade of grass is gemmed with the transparent pearl-drop, till it seems as if during the darkness an angel had been scattering crystals over the earth.

At night the land-breeze comes stealing down from the mountains with its reviving breath, and flowers which the tropic sun could not lure to unfold, raise their heads and give in gratitude their richest fragrance to the invigorating air. The blue heavens are bright and clear, and imagination brings the stars nearer to us than in the misty North. Soon after night-fall, the fire-flies throng the air in myriads; now rising, now falling, and now in undulating motion extending

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themselves over a vast tract of land, like living stars, giving animated beauty to the stillness of night.

At certain seasons the sheet-lightning, which is unaccompanied by thunder, has a most sublime appearance, issuing from the clouds in brilliant coruscations, fringing them momentarily as with richest gold, tracing the mountain summits in fiery outline, and then coiling around them in a thousand fantastic shapes.

An old Spanish writer, speaking of the West Indies, thus expresses himself:—"Often in my travels passing through the great gulfs of the ocean, and marching by other regions of so strange lands, staying to behold and consider the greatness of these works of the Lord, I feel a wonderful consolation of the sovereign wisdom and greatness of the Creator, who shines in his works, in comparison whereof all the palaces, castles, and princely buildings, together with all the inventions of man, seem nothing—yea, are base and contemptible in respect thereof.

"I know not what secret and hidden grace and virtue, the which although they be often beheld, yet do they still cause a grace and content; whereas contrariwise the works of man, although they be built with exquisite art, yet often seen they are no more esteemed but breed a distaste. Be they

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most pleasant palaces, or gardens, or stately temples; be they pyramids of proud buildings, pictures, carved images, or stones of rare work and invention, or whatever else, adorned with all possible beauty, it is most certain that viewing them twice or thrice with attention, the eye presently turns away, being glutted with the sight thereof.

"But if you behold the sea with attention, or some steep mountain growing from a plain to some strange height, or the fields clad in their natural verdure with pleasant flowers, or the raging course of some river, beating continually against the rocks,—though they be often viewed, yet doth it still breed a new content, and never gluts the sight, the which is like unto a stately banquet of the Divine wisdom, which doth always cause a new consideration without any loathing."

When we consider for how long a time this vast and beautiful portion of the world remained unknown to us, our gratitude deepens towards Columbus for having found a way to them through the deep, a path through the mighty waters. It is curious and interesting to go back into earlier times, when geography was in its infancy, when the Mediterranean Sea was considered the world's great ocean, and the Straits of Gibraltar the boundaries of the habitable globe.

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It is pleasant to enter with the ancients into their grave discussions of dimly-discerned subjects, now familiar to the little child. It was a saying of Pindar, that beyond Cadiz the sea was not navigable, and that it was not lawful either for wise men or for fools to attempt to explore the ocean beyond. Many historians of that time asserted, that the bounds of the earth were at Cadiz in Spain: there they planted the Pillars of Hercules, and there they set limits to the Roman empire, feeling assured that this was the utmost extent of the world. In the time of Aristotle, Nubia was the farthest point of discovery. Lucan reproves the curiosity of Julius Cæsar for wishing to discover the springs of the Nile.

"O Roman, what avails thee so much travail
In search of Nile's first source thyself to gravel."

But through all this darkness Aristotle's great mind pierced; though he was often baffled in conjecture, mistaken, puzzled, he was not discouraged. He thought the regions situated between the Tropics must be uninhabitable, because they were under the burning zone—that on account of the proximity of the sun to the earth, there could b neither waters nor pastures there.

Pliny's inquiring mind could not rest satisfied

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with Aristotle's opinion, but he went so far as to say, "The temperature of the middle region of the world, where the sun continually runs his course, is scorched and burned up as with a near fire." He allowed that there were lands on each side, which, lying between the zones, removed from the burning heat of the one and the cruel cold of the other, must necessarily be temperate, but he thought the inhabitants of these regions could have no intercourse with each other on account of the great heat which divided them.

Strange as this opinion may seem to us now, it was not without some apparent foundation. They found, that in proportion as they approached the South, the temperature increased—that in Italy, Apulia was hotter than Tuscany—that in Spain, Andalusia was much warmer than Biscay; therefore they concluded that those countries immediately under the Equator must be intolerable. What would have been their surprise if they had been told of the vast seas, the silvery fountains and sparkling cascades, of our West India Islands;

> "Where the citron and orange are fairest of fruit,
> And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
> Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
> And all save the spirit of man is divine!"

Although Pliny did that which was declared

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to be "unwise and unlawful,"—though he passed beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, yet the Canary Islands seem to have been the boundary of his progress, and the Great Gulf, which was the name he gave to the ocean beyond, remained unexplored. There is an interesting prophecy of Seneca in his tragedy of "Medea," in reference to his discovery of that portion of the globe which we call the New World, that now, through the lapse of years, seems to fall on us with the spirit and power of divination :—

> "An age shall come ere ages end,
> Blessedly strange, and strangely blessed,
> When our sea, far and nearer pressed,
> His shore shall further yet extend,
> Descried then shall a large land be.
> These, accounted heretofore
> The world's extreme, the northern bound
> Shall be when south-west parts be found
> A nearer isle, a nearer shore!"

Nearly two thousand years have passed since this was written, and the glorious scenery of the Western world tells us how the prediction has been verified. But Plato seems to have had a clearer idea than any of the existence of a continent beyond the Great Gulf—so vast that it exceeded in its dimensions both Asia and Africa; and adds, that from this enormous island there

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was a communication by sea with the other divisions of the earth.

Some go so far as to assert, that there is evident mention made in Scripture of the West Indies: they say that Ophir spoken of in the Book of Kings is the island of Hispaniola, and that Solomon caused to be brought from that very place the four hundred and fifty talents of most fine and pure gold, of which mention is made in the Bible. It is curious to trace the similarity which seems to have existed between the ancient Spartans and the Carib Indians. There was perhaps more refinement in the bravery of the one, and a greater share of untamed ferocity in the other, but both were fierce and warlike in their dispositions, restless, enterprising, and ardent, considering strangers as enemies, looking with contempt on everything appertaining to luxury, taking up war as a pastime, and cherishing the love of contest as a virtue.

The Caribs had a great antipathy towards the inhabitants of the larger islands; they were descended from one of the tribes of Guiana.

The Arrowhawk Indians, though taller, were less robust than the Caribs; and in that period of civilisation, in which personal strength is considered as incontestible proof of mental greatness,

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it is not to be wondered at that the Caribs regarded their weaker neighbours with contempt.

Yet these people possessed some degree of mental cultivation; though mild in manner, it is said they were noble in spirit, and though accounted indolent, the games in which they excelled give no proof of such a character. They displayed much activity and gracefulness in their dances, which were called "arietois," and more than fifty thousand men and women were sometimes assembled on those occasions. Another favourite diversion was the "bats," somewhat resembling our English cricket, for there were two parties of performers, who occasionally changed places with each other. They did not, however, use these bats as we do in that game, neither did they catch the large elastic ball with the hand, but received it on the head, elbow, or foot, and threw it off again with most astonishing force. Their broad faces and flat noses made, at a first glance, an unpleasing impression on strangers; but this feeling soon gave way under the influence of their tenderness of manner, and the warm sympathy which imparted its kindliest expression to their smile. They were strong in their affections, and made love almost the chief business of their life. No marvel, then, that

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towards a people so dissimilar from themselves the Caribs manifested a hatred, and that, longing to gratify their passion for war, they did so at the expense of their weaker neighbours; and by this very circumstance one is reminded of the rival and continually warring states of Sparta and Athens. Engaged as the Caribs were in constant warfare, they learned a contempt for the rest and relaxation of home. They sat pensive and silent amidst the household shadows, musing on future achievements, or brooding over some real or imaginary wrong.

Polygamy prevailed amongst them. The wife, honourably attained as the prize of successful combat, was soon cruelly neglected as the captive: in fact, as is common in uncivilised countries, all the females doing the hardest work, were treated as slaves, and not as companions; nor were they ever allowed to eat in the presence of their husbands.

In the centre of their villages, and covered by the leaves of the palm-tree, was a large tent or hall, in which the men, excluding the women, had their meals in common; and one is again reminded of the Spartans, by learning that in these halls their youth were instructed, trained to martial enterprises, and by the harangues of their rude orators excited to the desire of combat.

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They had—and what nation has not?—a dim and perplexed notion of a superior Deity, though their language had not even found a name for Him in whom they lived, and moved, and had their being; but this perception was darkly tinged by fear, as if the tremendous irregularities of nature around them, hurricanes sweeping their villages to the ocean, and earthquakes removing the mountains in their strength, spoke to them of power unsoftened by love.

Under these circumstances we feel our pity deepen, when we remember that the light of revelation had not reached their shores; and, dreadful as was the practice, we no longer marvel when we find man giving his fellow-man as sacrifice in the vain hope of propitiating the deity which conscience, raising its voice above ignorance and superstition, told them they had offended. They had many subordinate deities; almost every cottage had its rustic altar, made of banana-leaves and rushes, on which, at times of peculiar sorrow or anxiety, they placed the choicest of their fruits, trusting through the mediation of these household gods to appease incensed Omnipotence. But the unoffending Arrowhawk and the imperious Carib alike fell under the ruthless sword of the Spanish invader, with the exception

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of a very few, who hid themselves in dens and caves of the earth. Some descendants of the Caribs are yet found in the Windward Islands, and though they have lost their ferocity, and with it their spirit of independence, though slothful and careless in their habits, they remain to this day a peculiar and distinct people.

The peasantry of the West Indies has for many years been composed of African negroes. They are a mixed race, varying from the sable to the almost white. Though long debarred from all real improvement by many years of bondage, they have altogether lost the wildness of the first African captives, and their chief characteristics are great simplicity of manner, and an affectionate and forgiving spirit. Yet are they highly excitable, and towards each other sometimes strong in their resentment.

When uninfluenced by jealousy, they will respond to the smallest offerings of kindness with readiness, and are generous and impressible. It is true they continue to set about their self-imposed duties with languor and listlessness, but this, perhaps, must be attributed more to the depressing effects of slavery than to any original defect of character in the negro.

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II.

THE GULF STREAM.

One of the most extraordinary phenomena connected with the natural history of the West Indies is that ocean current upon which mariners bestow the name of the Gulf Stream.

Many scientific writers have laboured industriously in the attempt to explain its origin, though it can hardly be said that their efforts have hitherto been crowned with complete success. Their reasonings, however, are often probable, and the explanation they offer, in several cases satisfactory; but perhaps they overstep the modesty of science when they attempt to account for some particulars which are concomitants of the Gulf Stream, though whether consequences or not must be left to be determined by future investigation.

It may be observed, that the whole body of water which floats upon the surface of the earth

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is necessarily affected by the rapid motion of the globe from West to East, which occasions vast currents in the ocean, varied in their velocity and determined in their course by the configuration of the water's bed.

The air, which is but another ocean super-imposed upon the former, has likewise its currents; and one of the steadiest of these, called the South-Eastern Trade Wind, blows with great force towards the entrance of the Caribbean Sea, into which it propels a body of water rather disproportioned to its breadth.

Were the Isthmus of Darien removed, and a clear channel opened into the Pacific, this perpetual influx from the Atlantic would occasion but a slight rise in the level of the Gulf of Mexico. As it is, the water dashes against the eastern shore of America, which by the earth's diurnal motion advances as it were to meet this moving mass upon its surface. The water, therefore, is hurled back with great force, and driven out again through the Gulf of Florida, where, being obstructed by the Bahama Isles, it makes a violent sweep round to the north, and rushes like a vast river, varying from one to two hundred miles in breadth, up to the latitude of New York, before it makes any change in its course. There, however,

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it meets with the banks of Nantucket, which compel the current to change its direction. It then flows towards the north-east until it reaches the latitude of the Azores, or, on particular occasions, it mingles with the waters of the Bay of Biscay, or dies away upon the western coast of Ireland.

There are several circumstances connected with this mighty current for which natural philosophy can afford no explanation, that carry a thorough conviction to the mind; we mean, its extreme warmth, and the prevalence of those sea-weeds which for eight or nine hundred miles traverse the surface of the Atlantic in the general direction of north to south. It is contended and allowed, that all seas hemmed in by land attain a higher temperature than the ocean, and that the Gulf of Mexico in particular, being exposed to the rays of the torrid zone, and encircled by burning shores, becomes much hotter than any other portion of the deep.

But in these facts we can hardly discover an adequate reason for that immense torrent of warm water which forces its way through the ocean for nearly four thousand miles, and afterwards by its refluence forms a sort of mighty lake in the centre of the Atlantic.

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We are led rather to believe in the existence of submarine volcanoes which, acting upon the ocean from below, impregnate its waters with caloric, as they are forced by some unknown agency along their summits.

But the strength and velocity of the Gulf Stream spring from causes different from wind or heat or the conformation of shores, and must be allowed to remain amongst those mysteries which, in spite of all the progress made by science, still baffle the curiosity and intelligence of man.

The weedy sea also is surrounded with many difficulties. They who imagine that it is merely the result of an immense field of vegetation covering in that part the bed of the Atlantic, offer no satisfactory solution to the inquiring mind, because it still remains as uncertain and perplexing as ever why there should be such a field in that part of the ocean more than in any other.

Coral forests spring upon submarine volcanoes in other parts of the world, and their place may be supplied by sea-weed. But after all our investigations, we are driven back into the admission that the Author of the Universe has here acted in conformity with laws with which we are not yet fully acquainted.

It may nevertheless be observed, that the exist-

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ence of a warm stream and lake in the Atlantic, will account for many of those storms which habitually vex its surface. These are regulated by the same natural laws which govern the movements of the land and sea-breezes; and if they were not counteracted by other influences, the atmospheric currents on the ocean would be as tranquil and equable as those which prevail on tropical shores, when the air is not disturbed by the influx of other currents from the higher regions of the atmosphere.

But the fluctuating nature of the element, the mingling of hot and cold water, the variableness in its depth, the prevalence of submarine mountain ridges, and a variety of other phenomena, continue to surround the hot lake in the Atlantic with storms and tornadoes, which have sunk whole fleets, and shipwrecked the hopes of empires.

What some authors have said of the depression in the surface of the ocean, where it is traversed by the weedy sea, is in all likelihood purely fanciful; but if it exist, the cause they adduce will not account for it: we mean the greater amount of evaporation, since water too rapidly finds its level to allow of the existence of any such aqueous valley. It was these floating fields of ocean plants that filled the minds of Columbus'

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sailors with so much alarm. They looked on the vast masses of fuci darkening the surface of the waters as omens of coming disaster, imagining that they had arrived at the utmost boundary of the sea, or that some large tract of land lay sunk underneath them, mysteriously screened by this dangerous net-work.

Although when in congregated masses these dark-leaved plants give a dull hue to the sea, when taken separately, there is elegance and even beauty in their form; and if as poets say, in green summer bowers the nightingale warbles its love-song to the rose, imagination may give to Mother Carey's chicken, as it wings its stormy way over this troubled surface, some soft low note of comfort intelligible to these ocean flowers.

In calm weather, with their fern-like leaves, they float above the surface, taking into their inner self the very nature of the sea they love. Their clusters of thick damp berries retain their position unmoved even in a heavy swell, and these ocean grapes are beautifully gemmed at night by those brilliant phosphoric lights so abundant in the Gulf Stream.

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III.

LAND AND SEA BREEZES.

THE sea breeze, which begins in the West Indies at about ten o'clock in the morning, is caused by the action of the sun's rays upon the earth, which warming and expanding, the particles of air force them to ascend.

To prevent a vacuum, the denser and colder particles which form the atmosphere over the sea necessarily rush in, and take the place of those which have ascended to the higher regions of the air. These in their turn experiencing the effect of heat, expand and mount also, and thus a perpetual current is created from the sea to the land.

This process goes on till between five and six in the evening, when a sort of equilibrium is established in the atmosphere by the cooling of the surface of the earth, till it attains the same temperature with the ocean.

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Salt water, however, does not as readily yield forth the caloric which has been poured into it as the earth, consequently the surface of the sea retains throughout the night a considerably higher temperature than the lands on the coast.

Soon after dark, therefore, a process the reverse of that which took place in the day commences. The warmer air spread over the waves, rushes in a perpetual current upwards, which would occasion a vacuum there; but to replace the air thus removed, the atmosphere flows out from the mountains, as in the morning it had flowed in from the sea, and this causes the land breeze.

It may perhaps be worth while to observe that the reason why the sea is cooler by day, and hotter by night than the earth, is, that while the surface of the latter always presents the same particles to the sun; a very thin layer becomes almost intolerably heated, but from its very tenuity it does not retain the heat, and therefore at night becomes speedily cold.

On the contrary the surface of the sea being in continual motion, the watery particles which have been impregnated with caloric sink perpetually to a certain depth, while their place is supplied by others.

In this way a much thicker layer of water becomes

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heated than is possible on land, and this at once accounts for its greater coolness by day, and its greater warmth by night, because the caloric finds it more difficult to escape to the surface, and thence into the atmosphere.

A traveller in Hayti thus expresses himself, with regard to these breezes :—"Nothing in the freshness and fertility of the northern side of the island affords so much pleasure as the regular breezes from the land and sea. After the chilliness of the morning has past away, with the dissipation of the thin light mists rising from the plains, and floating in lines along the face of the mountains, the ocean wind awakes, and comes at first hesitatingly and tremblingly over the broad glassy surface of the sea. Its characteristics are completely different from those of the land breeze. All the poetical phrases of spicy and balmy sweetness are inapplicable to a wind sensibly fresh but without any odour. I can compare it only to that first exhilarating breath of the opening spring-time which visits the European fields with the sweet south when the winter is past."

After an hour of indecision, in which the ocean appears rippled only in spots and streaks, the glistening waves are seen pressing onward to the

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shore in a broad, determined, rolling mass of sea. When this movement of the waters reaches the land, the sea breeze is decidedly set in. It blows briskly till midday, continuing steady and strong till three hours after noontide, when it gradually decreases, and between five or six in the evening breathes its last.

The land breeze succeeds it, perceptibly charged with the odours of the forest and the dews of night. Its influence does not usually extend far to seaward, but where the mountains are lofty and regular, it sweeps strongly and steadily from their summits. Where the land is frequently depressed, or abounds in gorges and ravines, it comes tremulously down. In the country it is chill and bracing; and even a few miles from the sea, and in the plains, it is surprising how low the temperature is under its influence.

Those who have welcomed a cool summer evening after a cloudless August day in England, can form but a faint idea of the invigorating nature of the land breeze, laden as it is with gifts of fragrance from the orange boughs; awaking a thousand night flowers as it passes onward to the sea, and scattering their rich breath over the land.

The sea breeze always retains as it were a

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tropical character; it is sun-laden and impetuous, and although the vertical rays would be intolerable without it, there is a fevered heat in its rough breath as it sweeps by you.

But the land wind, born on the mountain summits, child of the twilight and the dews, has altogether another character, and seems sent on a special errand of mercy by nature's watchful guardian to soothe the sleeper, and give strength for the next day's toil and heat.

It comes as the blessing of God from above,
As a treasure of priceless worth,
All laden with fragrance and freighted with love,
In breathings of mercy to earth;
The night-blowing cereus yields its perfumes,
As sweet incense, in tremulous sighs;
The wild jasmin owns it, and unfolding blooms
As in sudden and grateful surprise.

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IV.

TRADE WINDS.

Among the most curious phenomena connected with a voyage to the West Indies is the trade wind, about which sailors and others talk so much and understand so little.

In order to introduce light on this subject, it is necessary to observe that our planet is immersed in an ocean of air, which rises above it on all sides to the height it is said of fifty miles.

Every particle of this ocean is capable of being expanded and rendered lighter by heat, and in this state of dilation and lightness rushes upwards towards the surface of the atmosphere.

The sun's track over this aërial ocean illuminates, and heats, and rarefies it in that part, and causes a perpetual tendency in the air to mount upwards.

The earth by moving from West to East, with a rapidity exceeding one thousand miles an hour, exposes every instant a new point to the vertical

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ray of the sun on which the greatest rarefactio takes place. To prevent a vacuum, the colder air from the North and South rushes towards the place from which the warm particles had ascended, and creates that steady current in the atmosphere on which we bestow the name of Trade Wind.

If the point of greatest heat were stationary, the aërial current would set in perpetually from the north, on the one side of the Equator, and from the south on the other; but as the sun's apparent motion is towards the West, the place of greatest rarefaction is constantly advancing in the same direction, and is necessarily followed by the stream of cold air which is meant to supply the place of what has been drawn aloft by the solar heat.

Two atmospheric currents are thus created, which flow from the north-east on one side of the Equator, and from the south east on the other. Their influences prevail over sixty degrees of latitude, thirty on the north, and thirty on the south of the Equator, but within this immense space a variety of accidents combine to affect the direction of the winds, and cause them to blow in apparent defiance of the general atmospheric laws. Into any consideration of these, it would be out of place to enter here.

We may remark, however, that on the borders

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of the great space which we have described as the field of the Trade Winds, there exists a counter-current, flowing nearly from west to east, which being operated upon by accidental causes, produces what are called variable breezes, irregular gales, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

As the air, like the water, moves in circles, there is in the region of the Trade Winds an upper current, flowing in a direction immediately opposite to that which is flowing below. This effect is produced by a very intelligible physical law. The particles of hot air when they have reached a certain elevation meet the cool super-incumbent æther, by which they are condensed and precipitated downwards, and thus acted upon they move north and south from the torrid zone to meet those fields of air to which they are by nature most assimilated.

Another law, of which all the conditions have not yet been discovered, occasions a circular motion amongst the aërial particles composing the lower stratum of the atmosphere, which, when extremely violent, we denominate whirlwinds. The West Indies lie exactly in the track of these terrible aërial circles, by which they have been more frequently devastated than any other portion of the earth's surface.

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V.

CUBA.

It is well to approach the shores of Cuba in the evening, when the low and flat land, scarcely raised above the level of the sea, is steeped in golden light; when the rocks which form the summit of the vast Cordillera, stretching through the island, are dyed in crimson; and when those peculiar and beautiful tints which a tropical twilight loves, gather in undulating and varying hues around the Snake Mountains.

In the rainy seasons the lowland roads of Cuba become almost impassable, so that it is very difficult to communicate with the interior.

Fortunately, however, the narrow form of the island enables the proprietors to bring their produce to the harbours without any very long journey; and a few years ago a line of railroad about forty or fifty miles in length was laid down between the Havanna, which is the capital of Cuba, and

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the most important sugar districts in the inland parts of the island.

On the north side, the lagoons near the shore are so continually filled with sea-water that a great quantity of salt is regularly collected. As the country rises towards the mountains, the trees increase in size and beauty.

The magnificent mahogany-tree stands in the midst of its own rich shadows, with tufts of pearly flowers delicately gemming its enormous boughs.

The mahoe-tree with its pale yellow bloom, the large wild tamarind-tree with its small and minutely-defined leaves, and many others, stand together in clusters, and commence as it were the forest-land. The whole range of mountains running through the island, lofty in the East, but decreasing into gently undulating hills in the West, is girdled round with mighty woods, hitherto in many parts untrodden by the foot of man, and inaccessible to the Indian as a place of refuge.

Mount Potrillo is nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the Sierra de Cobre, or Copper Mountains, are almost as high.

In some places a hoary monarch of the woods, which has fallen from extreme old age, may be seen, all softened by decomposition; and nature

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weaves for the prostrate trunk a beautiful shroud of flowering moss, whilst from the dense masses of tangled underwood around, thousands of wild flowers of every form and hue peep forth.

There are numbers of parasitical plants in this island, varying in size and appearance. Some embracing each other, fall again on the rocks, and creep round the lowliest things; others of a more aspiring nature reach the summit of some huge tree, winding themselves round the branches, and putting out their delicate blossoms as pale stars irradiating the dark foliage. Many of these creepers are singularly beautiful, adorning the trees with jewellery of ruby and topaz in drooping blossoms; others are of the lily kind, and snowy white: and the effect is increased by the manner in which they wend their flowery way amidst the branches of some giant tree—their delicate and airy loveliness being heightened by contrast.

The ananas, or wild pine-apples, grow out from the stems of trees, brightening them with their gorgeous flowers.

The stillness of these woods is oppressive. Suddenly the sky is darkened by a flock of wild parrots, and even their shrill chattering is no unpleasing break on the intense solitude. At other times a rich strain arises from some invi-

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sible songster, causing the air around to thrill with melody.

Here and there an elegant cocoanut-tree towers like a noble spirit above those around it; it does not, like the reed, bend under its own weight, but in proportion as it soars heavenward its branches expand and become vigorous. There is a legend concerning this tree, that it produces every month a new branch: so that, like that tree spoken of in the Apocalypse, during the year it bears as it were twelve manner of fruits.

This may be founded on the following circumstance:—The elegant and feathery branches crowning its summit consist of long ribs, from which narrow leaves unfold and spread out evenly on both sides. These ribs shoot from the top, and as the younger branches advance, the lower ones gradually droop, wither, and fall off.

The flowers of this palm spring out in bunches from the ribs, and are covered with a fibrous sheath of an oblong form. When they attain a certain degree of maturity, the sheath opens and gives birth to the blossoms, after which it quickly withers away; and as it dies, the flowers one by one decay and fall, leaving the embryo fruit, which is at the lower part of the stalk, to increase and ripen. Enveloped by this

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large fibrous husk is the celebrated cocoa-nut of the West Indies, whose hard shell is filled whilst young with a sweet and delicious fluid; but as the fruit ripens this liquid becomes thick and glutinous, adhering to the sides, and hardening gradually with time, until it acquires very much the substance and taste of the almond.

The cocoa-nut milk, as it is called by the negroes, is looked upon as one of the greatest delicacies of the West Indies. There is also a liquid obtained by tapping the upper part of the trunk of this tree, which, when mixed with molasses, ferments, and is in taste something like the East Indian arrack. At the bottom of the ribs is a coarse fibrous net-work which is used for strainers, and the husk of the nut is made by the negroes into no bad substitute for the English scrubbing-brush.

On the mountain sides, as they stretch out towards the lowlands, may be seen knots of orchards, surrounding the negro huts. The custard apple is there, with its pointed leaves and green flowers; this fruit somewhat resembles in taste the black currant; the bushy sweet-sop with its creamy fruit; the wild plum-tree, which seems to belong more to the forest than the orchard; and the star-apple, with its slender and

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flexible branches, and curious leaves, which are of glossy green on the upper part, and underneath of burnished gold, so that the beauty of its foliage is very much increased when it is agitated by the passing breeze, reminding us of those characters which seem to take new beauty from trial.

The negroes, however, have a proverb amongst them, "deceitful like star-apple," because, they say, this tree has two faces. It derives its name from the form in which its buds are placed; when the fruit is cut open in the middle it resembles a star.

Cuba has almost all the vegetables common to the British West Indies, although the yam and cocoa plants are not cultivated to any great extent in this island.

The yam is of a closer texture than our English potatoe, and may be seen in the negro grounds with its smooth leaves and long stalks, at the base of which appear small flowers, and these trail humbly along the ground, or cover some lone shed with their dependent shoots. Two or three of these well-known roots are generally planted together in holes, and then the earth around is carefully covered with cane trash, to protect it from the burning sun-rays and to

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prevent the growth of weeds, which would otherwise spring up and overwhelm the infant plants. When the yams are dug up, great care is taken not to wound them, as sprouts quickly spring from the part where any incision has been made, and the root is then unfit for anything but to be planted again. They are generally taken up in large quantities, and being covered with ashes, are put in barns or outhouses, on hurdles raised a little from the floor, that the air may pass under them. They are an excellent substitute for the potatoe, and are thought by some to be superior to that vegetable in quality and flavour.

Around the fruit-trees butterflies of all hues are scattered, like living fragments of the rainbow; but it is a little before sunrise that they appear in the greatest numbers, hovering, perhaps, over a dew-gemmed leaf, themselves more brilliant than those morning crystals, with wings expanded all the while, as if unwilling to rest on anything terrestrial. Some of these tiny creatures are robed as in dark velvet, traversed with emerald lines; others are of a ruddy gold; and several the very colour of the blue heaven above them. Many seem to have stolen the pale starry tints of the blossoms around, over which they hang enamoured, whilst a few take the purple tints of twilight, and

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bear them out into the day. They chase each other sportively in the cool bright air, and gradually retire as the heat increases.

There are many rivers rolling in almost imperceptible descent from the interior to the plains. Though not large, they are supplied with oysters and excellent fish. The oysters, which certainly are of inferior quality to those in Jamaica, adhere in numbers to the mangroves, as they bend over the water, till they appear like a curious kind of shell-fruit belonging to the tree. These rivers wind their way among the mountains, here forcing themselves through rocky channels, then growing wider, and becoming deeper in their hue under canopies of feathery bamboos; then suddenly, they swell out into small lakes, and these are bordered with delicate flowers.

The pearl-like convolvulus bends over the surface, as if to view its loveliness in the crystal mirror.

Tangled clusters of the marigold bathe in the clear waters; and close to the sea, where the flat and sterile land is destitute of other trees, you may trace the course of these rivers by the palms, which range themselves along their banks.

This scenery cannot fail to remind one of the feelings of Columbus when first he landed in

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Cuba, expressed in a letter to Ferdinand, king of Spain.

"There is a river," he says, "which discharges itself into the harbour that I have named, Porto Santo, of sufficient depth to be navigated. I had the curiosity to sound it, and found it eight fathoms. Yet the water is so limpid that I can easily discern the sands at the bottom. The banks of this river are embellished with lofty palm-trees, whose shade gives a freshness to the air; and the birds and the flowers are uncommon and beautiful. I was so delighted with the scene, that I had almost come to the resolution of staying here the remainder of my days."

There are several timber-trees in this island, among which the cedar, the lignum vitæ, and the ebony are the most numerous.

That the Indians were not unacquainted with the art of carving we know from the testimony of Columbus, who says that on his first arrival in Cuba the natives received him into their principal tent or hall, and the chair in which he was seated had carved animals to support it, whose upturned tails served as handles.

Notwithstanding Cuba's majestic mountain scenery, it is in her valleys that Nature holds its carnival. These mountain vales are in many

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places, even at mid-day, dim with green twilight from the arching boughs of trees which overshadow them. Their walls are forests, and their bed the cradle of myriads of wild flowers and blossoming grasses.

Birds of brilliant plumage flit about amongst the trees, and the undulating light and shadow on the mountains form by no means the least beautiful part of the picture.

Through some narrow gorge, a silvery-footed mountain torrent whispers its softest melody to the sunbeams, which reply by scattering diamonds on its waters. Occasionally a sudden opening in the uplands gives a view of the distant ocean, all whitened under the influence of the foam-awakening breeze. Here and there, in some silent glen, or perhaps in a dry river-bed, grows that large reed the water-withe, twisting and trailing from one shrub to another. Its vine-like stem, which is about three or four inches in thickness, yields, when broken, a plentiful supply of pure cold water; and negroes who have lost their way in the woods, have frequently been saved from perishing by timely supplies from this valuable reed.

In all parts of the country there are fields of maize, or Indian corn. It is cultivated throughout

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the whole island; even the leaves are not useless, but serve as food for cattle, under the name of marroja.

There is a greater quantity of rice grown in Cuba than in the other West India Islands.

Sugar and coffee are amongst its staple articles of commerce; and bees are cherished in this island, not only for the sake of their honey, but for their wax, which is bleached in great quantities.

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VI.

TOBACCO.

THE tobacco of this island is celebrated all over the world. It is altogether a mistake that it derived its name from the circumstance of its having been first imported to Europe from Tobago. Humboldt tells us, the word "tobacco" was simply the Haytian term for the pipe made use of to smoke this plant. The far-famed Cuba plant is not in general use all over the island, the lower classes are supplied with an inferior article from the United States.

It is said to have been introduced into England in 1586, by those who returned from Virginia, where they had vainly hoped to establish a colony under the auspices of Sir Walter Ralegh. Accustomed from infancy, as the Englishman is, to hear of Havanna cigars, he looks, when in Cuba, with no inconsiderable degree of interest on the tobacco plantations spread out before him. The rich soil

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and tropical climate are favourable to its speedy growth, particularly to that species in general cultivation throughout the island, the *Nicotiana repanda*. When very young, these plants require no small degree of care, and the way in which they are at first arranged reminds one of an English nursery-garden. With their delicate purple flowers and large succulent leaves, they stand in long rows about three feet apart from each other, and it is not till they have attained a considerable size that they are transplanted.

When they have become quite accustomed to their new situation, the lower leaves are taken off to increase the size and strength of the upper ones; the lateral branches are also continually and carefully pruned; and as if this were not enough to give strength to the plant, when it is about four or five feet high the top is taken off, that the stem may not be weakened by any more growth.

At the very first appearance of drooping, just when the green of the wide leaves becomes somewhat paler, when their odour increases and they feel rough, it is time to cut them down. This is generally done in the morning, and if the weather be clear and fine, which is generally the case at the period of the tobacco harvest, the plants are

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left on the ground till after mid-day, that they may be freed from all remnant of dews and moisture.

They are then housed, and on the following day the leaves are stripped off and hung up in rows to dry. When this process is completed, some are put into rolls; those for exportation are piled together in packages, and placed with the greatest care in large hogsheads, each bundle being put in separately, and the points of the leaves reversed with every alternate layer. When the cask is about a quarter filled, the tobacco is pressed down; and this being continually repeated, a hogshead sometimes contains as much as a thousand pounds. But if the tobacco be intended for snuff, the leaves are pressed together in large handfuls, and then bound round by strips of fibrous wood or strong grass; and when the balls thus formed are hard and quite dry, they have only to be rasped to produce the genuine Rappee snuff.

The Havanna cigar-making is a simple process. A man sits with a great many bundles of leaves before him; these he takes one by one from the package, and quickly passes them to his neighbour who stands near him, at a sort of table with ledges all round it, except on the part immediately

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before him. On this he spreads out the large smooth leaf, which he cuts into an oblong form, and putting the finely-chopped fragments of the other part of the leaf into the centre of this, he rolls it into a shape partially resembling the cigar.

It is then cut to the given length in an iron gauge, and rolled spirally in a narrow strip of leaf, when it is completed, and only has to be dried for sale. All this is so quickly done, that thousands of cigars can be made in a short time.

It is well known that the real Havanna holds the highest rank in the world, not so much for the excellency of its manufacture (for in this, perhaps, London excels), but for the flavour of its leaf, which attains such perfection in the congenial soil of Cuba.

Tobacco is not allowed to be cultivated in England.

The simple export of cigars from the Havanna is sometimes annually more than three million, three hundred, and twenty thousand pounds weight.

In 1843, and the year following, the consumption of tobacco in England was sixteen million pounds.

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VII.

THE HAVANNA.

THE Havanna stands on the borders of a beautiful harbour, and, commanding both inlets to the Gulf of Mexico, holds an important maritime station in the West Indies. The mouth of the bay is narrow, but it quickly expands into a wide lake, capable of receiving a thousand large ships. The scene on entering is picturesque and animated.

Steam ferry-boats ply across the clear blue waters: the city stretches along to the west, and the superb Regla spreads out on the opposite side.

The strongly-fortified castles of the Morno and Punta look down from slight eminences on the bay, whilst the citadel, in itself a fortress, seems to claim relationship by its strong ramparts to nature's mighty bulwarks, the everlasting hills, which stand cloud-capped in the distance.

On the heights immediately above the town

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there are batteries which command the port, and these grim towers, with palm-trees clustering round them for companionship, or softened perhaps by the dense shadows of some magnificent cedar, add not a little to the interest of the scenery.

The city itself stands on flat ground, separated by a wide ditch and glacis from its suburbs. The old town, compared with the new, is altogether an inferior place, having narrow, crooked, unpaved streets; yet, in spite of this, it can boast of many substantial houses made of stone, and some public edifices of real beauty.

The Cathedral, which contains the ashes of Columbus, the Government House, the Royal Tobacco Society, seem, as is sometimes the case in our own London, out of place amidst the humble buildings which surround them.

It is sad to know that in this lovely island slavery still dwells in its most rigorous form. It is true that the African traffic is forbidden, but the law is evaded and the base trade carried on with impunity. In her beautiful valleys the spirit of tyranny nestles.

The wild flowers, so remarkable in this island for their luxuriance, unchecked, unpruned, cover whole mountain ranges with their gorgeous dra-

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pery; the sea-bird soars at will over its waters, and wind and wave go whither they list: yet man binds with iron control the body and soul of his fellow-man, and freedom is suffered to droop its wings and die, whilst the natural world around is, as it were, freighted with liberty.

The late Mr. Turnbull, a man of high and liberal feeling, exerted himself much in this island in the cause of emancipation; and it is to be hoped the day is at hand when this dark stain will be removed from earth, and when even the world's remotest corners shall no longer be the habitations of cruelty.

The little village of Casa Blanca, looking over the waters of the bay, is notorious as being the landing-place of slaves sent to Cuba, and in spite of the gentle and smiling aspect given to it by nature, it certainly has no right to its name of *white*, associated as it is with deeds of wrong and darkness.

The only indigenous quadruped said to be known in Cuba is the jutia, something in appearance like a wild rat. Its home is in the crannies of rocks or the clefts of trees, and its simple diet, leaves, fruits, and berries.

The domestic dog has become wild, and, as if in punishment to the inhabitants for the use they

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made of it in hunting their fellow-creatures, it cannot be extirpated from the island, but continues to do a great deal of damage amongst the cattle.

This celebrated Cuba bloodhound seldom attacks man, unless pressed to do so in the chase. When tame, it is generally of a deep fawn colour; but when wild, of a dirty black, with a very rough coat. Yet even in its civilised state, though affectionate and gentle, as if not altogether free from its original nature, it has been known to make an unexpected attack on those around.

A gentleman carried two young ones to England, and although they behaved very well for some considerable time, he was eventually obliged to desist from making them the companions of his walks. On one occasion they seized a young lady, and held her, half fainting with fright, to the ground, and would not release her till the arrival of their master.

The Manati, or Sea-cow, often visits the shores of Cuba, where it is beset with shoals and reefs. It is a curious, clumsy-looking animal, with a thick head and very small eyes, and derives its name from certain fins near its throat resembling hands.

These assist it greatly in swimming, which it

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performs with very little noise, but with great timidity, diving into the waters, even at the echo of a distant sound. For its sight, which is not good, it appears to have received compensation in an unusual quickness of hearing.

Its neck is so short, that but for a peculiar movement, which makes it wrinkle, it would be difficult to tell the exact place where its ox-like head terminates, and its body, resembling that of a seal, commences.

There is a herb growing plentifully about these coasts on which the Manati feeds. The long narrow leaves, of intense green, spread out as a beautiful meadow under the waves.

Turtles, too, browse on these submarine plants, but only at certain seasons of the year.

Timid as the Manati is, it sometimes rises above the surface of the deep, eating such herbage from the shore as it can gather without altogether coming out of the water.

The negroes have a curious way of catching this creature. Whilst it is swimming about they go towards it, but, knowing that from its shy nature it will not allow any one to approach near, whilst the unsuspecting creature is yet at some considerable distance they dart at it a large arrow, fastened to a long rope.

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As soon as the Manati finds itself wounded it swims off with the arrow, rope and all, to a great distance; but the precaution has been taken of attaching a large piece of cork to the rope, and this acting as a buoy upon the water, marks the wounded animal's route.

When exhausted by pain and loss of blood it approaches the land, and the negroes, watching their opportunity, lay hold of the rope, and with the assistance of the waves the animal is without much difficulty brought to the shore.

Its inland carriage, however, is no easy matter. Two, and often more oxen, are necessary to draw the waggon into which it is placed when killed, for the Manati is exceedingly heavy, being sometimes fifteen feet long and six or seven feet in thickness. Its flesh is excellent, and considered by some persons superior in flavour to beef.

Gomard asserts that it is a most tractable and affectionate creature. In proof of this, he gives an account of one that was reared on a lake in the island of St. Domingo.

It was, he says, greatly petted by the family residing on the estate, and growing up as it were with the children, if it did not positively join in their sports, it endeavoured to please and gratify them.

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It was interesting, he says, to watch the huge creature placing itself with its back on a level with the land, so that the boys might conveniently get on it; and then to see it carrying them steadily across the water without once plunging in, or heaving in irregular motion, as it sometimes did when alone; and there was, he says, a conscious look of satisfaction in its thick face when it had performed this exploit.

It took food gently from the hand, answered to its name with a grunt, although its natural cry resembles the lowing of a cow; and if called by those with whom it was well acquainted, would come out of the water and follow them to the house, where it received bread or biscuit.

The voice of childhood always had a peculiar charm for this animal; a peal of merry laughter would cause it to pause and raise its head, with a look indicative of much satisfaction; and if, as we are led to believe, it is capable of receiving pleasure through the sense of hearing, what more likely to minister to this than the happy tones arising from youthful hearts, all unacquainted with the sorrow of life?

Among the first discoverers of this island gold was the great object of search. There is, however, no doubt that the Spaniards were disappointed

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in their expectations, and that they found very little of this precious metal in the sands or river-beds. The vast quantity of silver and gold sent to Spain after the conquest of the Antilles consisted, in all probability, of the accumulated wealth of the aborigines.

There were copper mines in Santiago, worked with some success in the course of the seventeenth century; but these were for many years altogether abandoned, through the difficulties which arose in consequence of the ignorance then existing of the art of extracting the metal from the ore.

A great quantity of mineral was left there, which being accidentally examined by an Englishman a very few years ago, was found to be so rich in metal that the old workings were explored, and companies formed to renew operations in the mines.

Steam-engines, horses, mules, and even camels, are now at work in Santiago; and the English company, employing emigrants from the Canaries, has been very successful.

The coal of Cuba is good, but though a few pits have been opened in the island, the means of communication with the interior are still so imperfect, that English coal sent out in the sugar-ships as ballast can be sold at a cheaper rate

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than the product of the island. It is also owing to the bad state of the roads that some of the excellent mineral springs are so little available to the inhabitants.

The waters, however, of San Diego Madringa —being only a few miles from the Havanna—have obtained no inconsiderable repute.

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VIII.

PORTO RICO.

Porto Rico is another island belonging to the Spaniards, and though the smallest of the great Antilles, it stands smilingly on its own clear waters, with a freshness of verdure and a fragrance about it that greet the sailor lovingly after he has been communing with only sea and sky for many weeks.

The island in most parts rises in conical mountains, whose slopes are cultivated in terraces rising one above another to the very summits, presenting to the eye a pleasing succession of variegated green.

The coast does not run in a regular line, but is beautifully indented by creeks and bays, so that there are some excellent harbours.

The lowlands are richly cultivated, and extend in fertile plains to the high mountain-line, which, as is generally the case in these tropical islands, runs through its centre.

The north side of the island is subject to heavy

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rains, so that the foliage there is green and luxuriant; and even towards the south, where there is sometimes long-continued drought, the verdure is not much impaired. This freshness may perhaps be sustained by the moist nature of the soil, water generally being found at about a foot and a half or two feet under the earth.

There certainly are no beasts of prey in Porto Rico, though rats are very destructive there.

The grey rat has flourishing colonies in the sugar-plantations; and a larger kind, of a darker hue, claims the penguin territory for his predatorial band; and though numbers of these little creatures are annually killed, they never seem to decrease.

There are very few birds in the island, and when we consider the beauty of its forest bowers and the shelter of their arching boughs, we marvel that so few singing-birds are to be found in their deep recesses.

A traveller who had frequently been through the island said you might journey for leagues without seeing a bird, or even hearing its chirp. It harbours, however, the tropical vulture; parrots are in its woods, and water-fowls on its streams; but singing-birds seem, with one consent, to have left the place to the music of its own

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waters, or to the still softer tones of the whispering evening air amongst the reeds.

The sugar-plantations are sometimes strangely intermixed with rice, corn, tobacco, and even coffee, which is said to be the best in the West India Islands; and the inhabitants take a great deal of pains in gathering and preparing the berry.

The possession of the coffee-tree is not confined to the wealthy, it flourishes in clusters round the humblest cottage.

The free poor, when they have provided a sufficient quantity of this article for their families, take the overplus to market, where they find a ready sale for it among the merchants. It is a cheerful sight to watch them at certain seasons of the year, journeying with the product of their labour to the towns; and all this industry comes in like a reviving breath of freedom on the unwholesome atmosphere of slavery.

On the regular plantations the coffee cultivated by slaves is pruned and kept low to strengthen the plant, which thus loses a considerable degree of its beauty and elegance. The soil of Porto Rico is very favourable to its growth, for even in the woods wild coffee-trees are found laden with berries.

All that is cultivated in the West Indies traces its lineal descent from a magnificent tree sent as

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a present by the magistrate of Amsterdam to Louis XIV. of France, in 1714. It was in full foliage, with both green and ripe fruit on it.

A short time after, some young plants—cuttings from this tree—were sent out to Martinique, under the care of Monsieur de Chieux, whose whole heart was in his desire to introduce these valuable berries to his country's colonies.

The weather during the voyage was extremely unfavourable, so that, being detained some time at sea, the crew were obliged to be put on a very limited allowance of water, and De Chieux divided his small share with the plants entrusted to his keeping, and happily succeeded in landing them all in good condition on the shores of the island.

The mountain plantations are said to produce the most delicately-flavoured berry, the sloping ground not allowing too much moisture to remain about the roots; but as in the richer soil of the lowlands it yields a larger produce, it is more extensively cultivated on level ground, the planter having found from experience that the flatter and more insipid nature of the berry does not in any way diminish its sale in the English market.

When the coffee is in blossom the fields present a very beautiful appearance. You might have passed that way the evening before, and not a

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bud may have been visible among the dark leaves. In one night the flowers expand, and hail the awakening day with a fragrance and beauty which are perfectly surprising. Every tree is covered with pure white blossoms, and has justly been said to represent an English autumn scene, when an early snow-fall has during the night covered the orchards which are yet in full foliage. The flower greatly resembles our jasmin, and its richly-scented breath is wafted to a great distance on the air. It is a lovely evergreen, and its glossy leaves bear a very considerable resemblance to our English laurel.

These trees do not bear fruit till they have been planted about three years. The berry is red, and something like an English cherry. It has a glutinous pulp enclosing two hard seeds, which as most of us know, are round one side and flat the other; and these seeds are covered by a membrane technically called "the parchment."

The coffee-trees cannot bear the unmitigated rays of a tropical sun, and where they are unprotected by mountain shadows or neighbouring wood-land, it is customary to plant trees of speedy growth to overshadow them.

In Arabia the berries are not gathered till they have commenced falling, so that the tree has

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only to be shaken, and they are quickly scattered on a linen cloth spread out to receive them. They are then removed to a shady situation, where, on spongy mats which imbibe the moisture, they can be properly dried. But in the West Indies this manner of proceeding would not answer, for there is always a sufficient degree of damp existing, at least in the mountain regions, to prevent the berries from being perfectly dried; and even in the lowlands the rains, which are more frequent and violent than in many parts of the East, cause the berries to fall from the tree before they are fully ripe. The state of the seed is easily ascertained by the colour of the berry, which gradually deepens in red as it ripens.

The time of coffee gathering is one of much interest and excitement. Several negroes surround the trees, and each is provided with a large bag which he slings round his waist, so that his hands may be liberty. These bags are kept open by an iron ring at the top, and when filled their contents are thrown into baskets, which are placed at frequent intervals along the plantations.

In spite of the heavy chain of slavery, the negroes while thus employed sing and gambol, and are, even if for a little while free from the cruel surveillance of an overseer, as forgetful of their

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bonds as if the spirit of freedom had alighted amongst them. There seems, indeed, to be a peculiar buoyancy of disposition given to the negro, implanted in his bosom by Him, "who stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind."

When the coffee-berries are gathered, they are placed in layers of five or six inches deep, on large platforms, in the sun. The pulp at first ferments, but gradually dries. The husks are afterwards separated from the seeds by a mill made for the purpose, but the membranous covering of the seed, the parchment which we have already mentioned, can only be removed by continued washing, and by heavy rollers running through, in which the seeds are placed. There is then a winnowing process, by which the grain is separated from the chaff, after which the coffee is ready for the storehouse or for exportation. When intended for private use, it is just plucked from the tree, then beaten out, and taken as it is wanted. If, as is sometimes the case, any moisture remains with the seed, it has an exceedingly unpleasant flavour, and is considered injurious. Dr. Tilford recommended that coffee should be sent home to England in the pulp, as it would by this precaution be kept from imbibing the flavour of the rum and sugar with which the West India merchant-vessels are laden.

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In 1652 the first coffee-house was opened in London by one Pasqua, a Greek, in George Yard, Lombard Street; but this valuable berry did not find its way to Jamaica, the largest of the British colonial possessions in the West Indies, till 1732.

The tobacco of Porto Rico is also very good, though not equalling that of Cuba; and we seem again for a moment or two to rise above slavery, when we find that a small traffic with this plant is carried on by the free labourers, who provide the village shopkeepers with it, and these again sell it to the merchants in the capital.

A principal feature in the scenery of this island is the natural meadow-land, which is beautiful and extensive. In the inland mountain valleys where the cultivation of sugar, owing to the distance from any place of shipment, would be tedious and expensive, large herds of cattle are permitted to range at will. During the intense heat of midday they are to be seen in numbers, standing in the clear mountain stream, or resting under some sheltering forest-tree. In the lowlands, too, there are some extensive pastures.

In seasons of heavy drought many of the cattle die; even in the waggons the oxen sometimes fall from exhaustion.

In Porto Rico the country-houses are all made of wood, and as there are as yet no inns for

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travellers, the spirit of hospitality exists in all its fervour. The windows of these large old-fashioned mansions have no glass, but are closed with sliding boards, so that when there is a sudden storm the guests find themselves in complete darkness.

There are many poor white people in the mountains, a race not to be met with in the British West Indies, where fairness of complexion in itself creates a certain degree of aristocracy. These people are called Xivaros, and a happy and independent set they are. Coffee and plantains serve them for dinner, and we question if the fashionable bedstead, with plaited quilt and damask drapery, could win a sweeter rest than those swinging hammocks in which, alternately with sleep and the cigar, they wile away the passing hours. Sometimes, however, the Xivaro takes horse exercise, and, reckless altogether of the appearance of the rough and half-starved animal, he sallies forth in his broad-brimmed hat and cotton jacket, as satisfied with himself and his equipments as any fashionable equestrian in Hyde Park.

San Juan is the capital and sea-port of the island. In appearance it is very like the Havanna; the same narrow streets, interspersed with good public buildings, overlooked by forts and castles, whilst the clear, deep harbour, keeps up the resemblance to Cuba's capital.

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IX.

ST. DOMINGO.

THAT which perhaps strikes one most forcibly on first looking at Hayti, is the irregular though beautiful appearance of its mountains. They are not, as in most of the other islands, a simple chain running from east to west. A bold line stretches out to the left, softening into gentle hills at the extremity of the long promontory of Tiburon. In the centre of the island there is, as it were, a gathering together of the loftiest mountains, some of which are more than six thousand feet in height, and this mighty cluster is called the Cibao.

There are broken ranges running easterly, and you may track the mountains in their fantastic and irregular course far down to the south; and all are clothed with verdure, with evergreen forests ascending almost to their summits.

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The shores are exceedingly picturesque. Sometimes a promontory boldly juts out into the sea, and then the coast withdraws, forming creeks of singular beauty.

In the wide and yet deep indentation of land between the peninsula of Tiburon and the north-west promontory of the island, is the beautiful and spacious bay of Gonaive, on whose bosom rests the island of the same name, and in the luxuriance of its tropical foliage seems like an emerald set in its pearly waters. Far out on the seas around are small uninhabited islets and dangerous reefs, but, notwithstanding the difficult approach, the island has in many parts excellent harbours.

The mountains nowhere extend to the shore, along these vast savannas stretch for miles.

In the south-east are the plains of Les Lianos, which have a breadth of twenty or twenty-five miles throughout their course. These have generally been used as pasture-land, and during the time that the Spaniards were incited by their French neighbours to be industrious, they were thronged with cattle.

North of this, and extending inland between two lofty mountain ranges, is the gigantic valley

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of Vega Real; and this at one time, being carefully cultivated, was the garden of all the products of the island. In the west are the extensive savannas of Artiboniti and the Cul-de-Sac.

Numerous rivers, with gold still lingering in their sands, intersperse these plains, their abundant waters being supplied by mountain torrents, which have made for themselves a silvery pathway from the high lands. Sometimes, leaping over rocky barriers, they break into beautiful and misty spray, and then softening into rippling melody, they bear on their boon of life to the rivers.

Indeed Hayti's mountain scenery would, after all, be imperfect without these cataracts, which are to the face of nature what a brightly intelligent expression is to the human countenance—they give life and animation to the landscape.

Towards the south, as if the sea, envious of the plains, had determined to take to itself some portion of the land, there are large lakes, beautifully surrounded by water-loving trees. Bamboos cluster there, nodding their plume-like branches over the crystal surface. River-birds are busy amidst the reedy grass; and the delicate nicker-tree with its thorny stalk, whose seeds the island children use as marbles, rises gracefully up, finding an elegant supporter in the bushy

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scarlet cordia, which, with its radiant tufts of crimson flowers, cheers and brightens the denser foliage around.

The lake of Asney is fresh, all the others are salt.

Fever is very prevalent in the lowlands, and whilst the mountain climate is bracing and exceedingly healthy, a very little descent brings one into an atmosphere pregnant with death.

There is a wonderful cavern in the *parti au nord* of Hayti, the sight of which repays the traveller for a little fatigue in reaching it. The cavern is situated in a valley called La Guille, on the banks of the Ballyaha, a tributary of the Guayamico. A wooded monticule, about four hundred feet high, rises with a cliffy face from the river. The waters wash its base; a few masses of detached rock lead up into a spacious archway, the vestibule of the grotto. The eye accommodated to receive the mid-day sun, distinguishes on entering nothing in the visible darkness of the chamber. On gaining the extremity of the cavern you stand beneath a dome, which, rising with a sort of regular irregularity, pierces the mountain. A subdued radiance pours through the forest-trees above, and by degrees the roof becomes visible to you, and appears to

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be composed of elegant fretwork. The walls are stuccoed with white incrustations, in curtained folds exquisitely disposed. Niches and recesses of different dimensions are around this saloon. The light falls on the edges of the excavation, and illuminates a succession of circular ridges like galleries. The vision at length becomes sufficiently sharpened to discover all the details of the chamber. The entire parts seem to come forth mysteriously out of the darkness. Every minute projection swells into light, and shadow, and distinctness. On turning to descend through the gallery, what was before shapeless darkness seems, by the conjuring of a magician, to have become a hall of rich and varied fretwork. The stalactites hang from the roof in pendent chaplets; the arches spring from the sides of the cavern as if on pillars of coral-work; the light, the darkness, the blended shadows, the broken illumination, the hanging garlands, the crystallised icicles, seem the visioned beauties of a wild dream.

Every year, we are told, the Casiques of the principality come to this grotto with a crowd of their subjects, to renew their homage to the gods of their country.

Some time before Caanaboa, the Carib warrior, created for himself a kingdom in the heart of the

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Indian Hayti, threatening the subjugation of the whole island, a prince of Marien demanded in penitence, fasting, and prayer, to be informed whether it was the will of those who held the fate of men in their hands that they should become vanquished and enslaved by the Carib invaders. The reply was—"No, not by these naked warriors shall the people perish; but when they shall see men arrive among them clothed from head to foot, with swords of metal at their side, then shall they know that the time of their destruction is at hand, then shall they be led into captivity, and they and their children shall be seen in their homes no more."

This prediction was sung in solemn chants, and some fasts were observed to avert the predestined calamity.

These stated solemnities were times of woe and lamentation, and the chants in which these events were declared were heard by the early Spaniards. Sculptures are from time to time found in the ground near this cavern. A visit to it is worth the pilgrimage of a traveller.

This grotto is a natural King Henry the Seventh's chapel, with the centre tower of York cathedral.

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The lowland soil of Hayti is of a rich vegetable mould, the fertility of which, in consequence of its being well watered by rivers, is almost unequalled. Even the forest-clad mountains are to their summits capable of cultivation. All kinds of trees are there. Palms cluster together, and then stretching out, ascend in winding avenues the steep hill-sides.

Giants of the wood stand up on the mountain summits, some invested with a net-work of parasitical plants, others with the knotted underwood coiled round their hoary trunks, yet putting out new and beautiful branches in spite of their thraldom.

During the domination of the French in Hayti, the Cul-de-Sac, now given up to a few herds of cattle, presented one undulating surface of sugar-cane. The morning breeze passed as the spirit of gladness over it, and the evening air sent far out on the sea its peculiar and aromatic fragrance.

It has been said that the far-famed sugar-cane is not indigenous to America, and though we do not know of any exactly answering to the species now in general cultivation which has been found growing spontaneously in the West Indies, yet Francis Ximenes and other Spanish naturalists affirm that it has been seen flourishing wildly

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and luxuriantly near the Rio de la Plata, and on the shores of the Mississippi. It seems, however, almost an established fact, that Columbus introduced this plant into Hayti on the discovery of the island, as if the rich lowlands presented to his view on landing suggested to him the idea of its easy and extensive propagation.

Sugar was introduced into Europe from the East at the time of the Crusades. In the year 1166 mention is made of it in Sicily, though its use was at that time confined to medical purposes. There is every reason to believe, that from Sicily it was carried to Spain. Spain would assuredly send on this valuable article of commerce to Madeira and the Canary Isles, and from these, even had it been forgotten by Columbus, it would easily have found its way across the Atlantic to the West Indies.

We know it has been fanned by sighs, watered by tears, and cultivated there at the sacrifice of liberty and life, mostly to enrich those who never visited the place where it grew—who never even thought of the dark channel of suffering through which their supplies of wealth had to pass ere they ministered to their luxury.

The Bourbon is considered the best kind of cane; it is of a larger size than the others, and

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its joints are frequently eight or nine inches in length. Not only does it from its size resist dry weather better than the smaller cane, but the *borer*, an insect that destroys many of the others, passes it by. This little creature has a regular pair of nippers proceeding from its oblong head, which enables it with ease to make an incision in the pithy substance of the common cane.

It is in general about ten feet high, but in the fertile plains of Hayti often reaches twenty feet, and several shoots spring from the same root. There is a leaf at each joint, the lower part of which, before it unfolds, embraces the stalk for some inches. These leaves are narrow, and with such sharp edges, that if passed across the hand they will cut it like a knife. The flowers, of a light purple, are spiky, and enclosed in a sort of down. The seeds are pointed, and ripen in the flower-valves.

Before the ground is dug for the planting of the sugar-cane, it is measured out into squares of three or four feet each. As the digging proceeds the mould taken out of these squares is placed in a bank at their sides, so that the plantation soon assumes the appearance of an English field newly ploughed. Cuttings of the cane, each containing

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five or six gems or eyes, are placed horizontally at the bottom of these holes, and covered lightly with a little of the earth from the bank at the side.

In twelve or fourteen days the tender shoots appear, but so very gradually is the mould placed around the roots of the young plants as they grow, that it is sometimes four or five months before the ridges of land are completely levelled. If the plantation be carefully weeded, and there are a few showers of rain, the canes flourish and grow rapidly. Sometimes, however, they suffer from what is technically called the *blast*, but which very much resembles our English blight; for it is occasioned by myriads of insects, so small as to be invisible to the naked eye, or rather appearing only as white spots on the leaves. When the cane is cut, the top shoot, which is full of eyes, is generally preserved for planting; the rest goes to the mill, which consists of three iron-plated rollers, from thirty to forty feet in length, and about twenty-five feet in circumference.

The leaves having passed through the first and second rollers, are turned round the third by a circular sort of screen, called by planters the "dumb returner," and then they are forced back again

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into the rollers from which they have just emerged, and are there squeezed completely dry. The juice as it is pressed from the cane falls into a leaden bed, from which it flows into a vessel called the "receiver," and it is conveyed from this by a wooden gutter into the boiling-house, where it flows into one of the clarifiers. These are large vessels, in which the cane-juice is first boiled. There are generally three on every large estate, and they are each of a size to contain about a thousand gallons.

The crushed rind of the cane serves as fuel for the large fire necessary to be kept up for sugar-boiling; and quick-lime, called *temper*, is from time to time poured into these clarifiers, to counteract the acid in the boiling liquid. When the scum begins to rise on the surface, the fire is suddenly extinguished, and the sugar is left for an hour or more to settle; it is then sent through a gutter into the evaporating boiler, which is generally known by the name of the "grand copper;" but the froth, being of a gummy consistency, does not flow out with it.

Boiling then recommences, and more scum being taking off, the fluid, whilst it acquires a greater consistency, begins to appear transparent; and in a short time so much of it evaporates, that

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it is contained easily in the second smaller copper. It is again twice boiled, the vessel being changed every time. From the *tache*, or fourth copper, it is poured into shallow wooden coolers, each capable of containing about a hogshead of sugar. This part of the process is called "striking," and it is very beautiful to observe the sugar grains forming themselves into imperfect crystals, which brightly stud the dark molasses around them. From these "coolers," the sugar passes on into the "curing-house," where the molasses drain off.

There is a large cistern for their reception, in the midst of which, on a sort of shelf, empty open hogsheads are placed, and several holes are bored in the bottom of each, through which stems of the plantain-leaf are pushed, till they rise a little above the top of each cask. As the liquid, if still it may be called such, for it has now acquired considerable body, rushes down into the great cistern, its progress is intercepted by these barrels; the molasses, being thin and watery, flow easily through the plantain stalks; whilst the sugar, thus distilled, from its thicker nature remains behind.

And this is sugar-making! This is the work in which a few years ago the lash of the oppressor was heard, even in England's colonies, urging

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the slaves to a labour beyond their strength and life! This is the toil in which, for so many years, Cruelty stood forth unabashed, in which Tyranny raised up its head, and took possession of the beautiful world around it!

Bright islands of the West, by what dark crime did ye draw down on yourselves the frown of an offended God? Why, when your forests, mountains, and valleys were teeming with beauty, did the demon of iron bondage crush the very spirit of your sons? No marvel, suffering negro, that our gentle Christian poet thus spake for you:—

"Why did all-creating nature
Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil!
Think ye, masters, iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards,
Think how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
Is there One who reigns on high?
Has He bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from His throne, the sky?
Ask Him if your knotted scourges,
Matches, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means which duty urges
Agents of His will to use?

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Hark, he answers! wild tornados
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which He speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric's sons would undergo,
Fixed their tyrants' habitations
Where His whirlwinds answer, No!"

However far the imagination of the poet may have gone in giving nature a retributive power, it is nevertheless certain, that even from those remotely connected with this cruel traffic prosperity has turned away. This may not appear on a first view of the case; but if we track the whole system in its windings, we soon find that the wealth thus wrung from human misery has never been separated from the alloy of self-reproach and anxiety with which it is mingled. Men's hearts are not so callous as they would have us believe, and from time to time the sternest of these slave-drivers has heard a boding tone in every breath of heaven; has trembled at his own shadow; and at last, in the very cowardice of guilt, has sometimes put an end to his existence.

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X.

A TROPICAL STORM.

SOME years ago a tropical storm laid waste, in its fury, a great portion of cultivated land in Hayti, of which we received the following graphic account from an eye-witness of the tempest :*—

"Those who remember Aux Cayes before the destructive hurricane of the 15th August, 1831, wasted nine-tenths of the city, and left two-thirds in ruins, speak with rapture of the verdure and agreeable variety which the lanes and pathways afforded for morning and evening walks.

"The little cottages outside the town were humble enough, but they were situated in gardens always green. The materials of which they were built, and with which the grounds were enclosed, were a sort of wicker-work, made of the reeds of the savannas and marshes. About these the bind-weed wound its trellis-work of flowers, and the

* Richard Hill, Esq. of Jamaica.

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oranges grew, in little lanes from the humble bridge to the cottage door.

"In my rambles about the town I see indeed the fruit-trees, but they are putting forth blossoms on the stricken stump in any form but that of agreeable bowers; the gardens are changed into wild thickets; and masses of fallen trees still lie across the green paths and wandering streamlets. The destruction of these frail cottages must have been rapid and complete, since whole streets of substantially-built houses were left as perfect a spectacle of ruin as any that have been discovered in Pompeii; indeed many parts of the town vastly resemble that street of tombs.

"The palm-trees suffered greatly. Whole avenues at the road-side were overthrown, and amongst the few still left uninjured are broken columns, putting forth again their coronet of leaves; and these have a melancholy aspect, standing as they do among their fallen brethren.

"Aux Cayes was greeted by the mariner from the seas as the City of Palms. Nothing could surpass the cheerful aspect of houses and groves amid green savannas in such a climate. Its streets had been polluted by the slaughter of revolution, but the fire had never devastated here as elsewhere. People who saw it before its last

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calamity beheld an unchanged city of the ancient colony; and if the wild green aspect of the plains could have been imagined to be the bright carpet of its former industry, there was nothing either in the orderly manner in which the streets were kept, or in the state of the houses, or in the social intercourse of the inhabitants, their appearance and courteous affability, which was not calculated to recall the by-gone times of its happier and more prosperous days."

There was nothing unusual in the weather immediately preceding this fearful hurricane. It had been excessively hot during the day. The haze which accompanies steady dry weather had enveloped everything, so that the plains looked almost measureless like the sea, and the mountains skirting the horizon like faint and indistinct clouds.

The Isle of Vache, with its low angular outline, seemed to hang between the heavens and the ocean, and the vessels that appeared on the horizon looked as if they were floating above the waters like Treharne's ship of the air; but these are the ordinary signs when drought prevails, and no one could see in them the presage of that calamity, which at one fell swoop was to make Aux Cayes a city of woe, lamentation, and death.

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Towards sundown, the bright and sparkling day began to gather cloudy and dull; and so quick and dense thronged the hurrying clouds about the sun, and so sudden was their appearance, that every one seemed to wonder how and whence they came, for the earth and the ocean were still without a breath of wind. Whilst all were busy looking at what at least seemed strange, the shining sea, that had all day lain as if it were a sheet of molten glass, suddenly heaved and swelled, but without a ripple on its surface. At length the swell broke into white on the rocks of the Vache Island; but still, though there were broad indulations on the ocean, not a single billow was curling on its bosom. Then the sun went down, not in that red suffusion of light which betokens a windy uprising, but white and intensely bright, the very clouds being fringed as with burning silver. There was something strange in all this, yet no tempest was anticipated. It continued intensely hot, and every one wished for the coming of the usual land-breeze. Night deepened; the stars rose and set, but not even a breath of air stirred the foliage. The mysterious heaving of the sea increased, and black vapours accumulated, not as if coming up from any particular quarter where the wind lay sleeping, but concentrating

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the exhalations that had filled the air with such obscurity during the day.

The first sound of the stirring elements that broke on the stillness of the night was the shock of an earthquake; it subsided with its usual tremor, and those who heard and felt it said their "Misericordia" and went to sleep again. Half an hour after, a second shock was felt. It did not pass away so silently, but with it rose a gust of wind, shrieking and yelling as if a warring spirit had suddenly rushed from heaven to visit earth with an awakening exclamation of dread and misery. This was at about half-past two o'clock. From that moment the heaven and the ocean were stirring and full of strife. The storm-shrieks were uttered in rapid succession, till they became lost in one wild rush and turmoil; and at length nothing was to be heard but a sound as if all creation were the roaring blast of a mighty furnace.

As for the sea it was literally stirred into foam, and the air into a rushing mist, which those who were familiar with the phenomenon of a steam-engine could compare to nothing but the volocity and noise of the discharged vapour when the valve is opened, and the white and hissing steam shoots upward like a rocket. It was so intensely

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dark, and the air withal so palpable, that nothing was to be seen, except when the lightning flashed across the dense blackness. Nothing was heard save the furnace roar of the elements; no thunder; not even when the electric fluid struck down a palm-tree, and several were laid low that night.

Those who from their unroofed dwellings looked up to Heaven and cried for mercy, say they beheld the light as if it issued from the clouds in a ball of fire, out of which darted the quick effulgence in all directions. During all this time the noise of the sea increased, and it rose five feet over the surface of the land. The river which passes through the town was driven out of its course, inundating whole streets as it wildly forced a way to the ocean. Violent earthquakes rent the houses to pieces on all sides, some were hurled into the air by the tempest, and the timbers being then spread abroad descended like a shower of arrows through the darkness. Yet so had the floods lifted up their voice, that in the midst of all this nothing was heard but the angry ocean, as swelling, boiling, and hissing, its proud waves rushed over its usual barrier.

In the harbour, of course, not a ship was saved; in the inundation scarce a child escaped. Those who could stand beyond the five feet of water

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lived out the two hours of horrid endurance. There were pauses in the tempest, in which one seemed to hear the frothy settling of the sea. Shrieks and lamentations rose up wildly on this death-like calm. Then the battle of the elements again went on. The winds yelled, the lightning flashed, the earth trembled, till, as if mysteriously influenced by the dim breaking of day, the storm seemed to acknowledge the first sprinkling of light on the mountains, and softened down into heavy rain.

Towards the afternoon nature forgot to weep for the havoc it had wrought. The skies cleared, the heavens smiled, the waters sparkled, the fields looked fresh and green, and it was difficult to believe that one hundred and thirty souls had perished during the awful night, and now rested in graves wrought for them by the storm amidst the ruins where they fell.

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XI.

TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

HAYTI has in turn produced gold, copper, tin, and iron. With its copper is a considerable admixture of gold. Even with the river-sands, gold dust mingles in small quantities.

The riches of the ancient inhabitants of this island are mysteriously dwelt upon by Robertson, but no doubt the reality of their golden possessions was magnified by the mist in which they were shrouded. Indeed this historian goes so far as to say, that from its mines alone the annual revenue of the island was one hundred thousand pounds. But how can this statement be reconciled with the deplorable state of poverty in which Sir Francis Drake found the country in 1558, the inhabitants at that time being so wretchedly poor that they used pieces of leather as a substitute for money.

There is little interesting or exciting in the

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history of the West India Islands. It contains some pages darkened with the most dismal records of human nature, when the Spaniards hunted like beasts of the field the native Indians who had never wronged them, till those who escaped from being torn to pieces by ferocious blood-hounds took shelter in dens and caves of the earth, and perished there from starvation.

Then Slavery brings in a new race, and scatters thousands of Africans over the land; and the whole history of these islands becomes one long scroll of Power trampling on Weakness, of Oppression driving Justice from the land.

Occasionally a great mind rose up and almost triumphed over bondage itself, though, owing to the times in which it unfolded, it had to contend with a poisoned atmosphere.

It was in Hayti that the famous negro chieftain, Toussaint l'Ouverture, made for himself a name ever to be associated with admiration and sorrow; and the short and tumultuous history of this man is but a beacon-light warning us of the dangerous nature of slavery.

Toussaint was originally a negro slave on the estate of Count Noe. Fortunately for him, he was employed on a plantation under the management

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of M. Bayou de Libertas, a man of kind heart and generous feeling. By his own exertions Toussaint taught himself to read and write, and even acquired some knowledge of arithmetic. This would be no great achievement for a servant in our own land at the present time, where it has been proved to be the interest of the upper classes to facilitate the education of the poor. He lived at a crisis when, amidst the clanking of slavery's chain, the voice first made itself heard that "knowledge was power," and all information was therefore rigidly kept from the working-classes.

Toussaint, however, broke through the barrier that kept his brethren in ignorance. Difficulties which would have overwhelmed less buoyant spirits, he overcame by his undaunted perseverance, and continued his simple and quiet course of mental culture, surrounded by those who lacked even the desire of improvement, satisfied that all necessary knowledge was comprised in boiling a plantain or preparing a pottage of salt fish.

M. Bayou's mind took, however, a wider range. At the river-side, among the whispering reeds, he observant Toussaint with his book, during the evening leisure hour, and taking him from the drudgery of field labour he gave him the situation

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of postilion, so that his time for study being lengthened, his mind became proportionally enlarged.

Every one who knows anything of slavery is aware, that notwithstanding its general nature of rigorous exaction, when anything like a reciprocity of kindness exists between the owner and the human being whose very life is in his power, a freedom of intercourse springs up unfettered by that restraint which Society places between the master and servant in European life. The absolute power of the one, and the entire dependence of the other, creates of itself a shadowy and dismal resemblance of the relationship between parent and child; and Toussaint's intelligence and clear, discriminating power of thought, soon became known to his master.

It was a pleasant thing during those iron times of despotism, to see that manly and really handsome negro riding by his master's side and entering freely into conversation with him, whilst the peculiarly intelligent expression of his dark countenance gave him a striking and animated appearance.

On the surrounding plantations, coarse threats and ferocious oaths were the only words addressed by the white man to his slave, but M. Bayou

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knew how to encourage perseverance, and Toussaint, in return for his love and fealty to his master, received from him consideration and kindness.

There were other qualities in this negro's mind which stormy times only could reveal. It was in troublous hours that the strength of his character became apparent. When others were driven by desperation to wildness, it was left to him to prove that indomitable courage could be tempered by gentleness, that resolution was all the stronger for being grounded on principle instead of impulse.

The rebellion broke out, and the white masters were compelled to fly before their infuriated slaves.

Even in a civilised mob, moderation is unthought of, and what could be expected from wild Africans, half-cannibals still? The yell of their war-whoop was like the roar of the beast of prey; and life itself was not enough to satiate their thirst for revenge. The estates were set on fire, and on the unfortunate whites who fell into their hands they took an ample and cruel revenge for the rigour inflicted on them in servitude. Many of the planters escaped to England; hundreds took refuge in Jamaica; and for a while barbarity triumphed in that devoted island. There was a want of concert in the plans of the insurgents,

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and they began to feel, that though they had thrown off the yoke which galled them, discipline could not be separated from success. It was then in their difficulty that they thought of Toussaint l'Ouverture: all knew he was the friend of freedom, but of freedom purchased by manly courage, undisgraced by atrocity and crime. He knew well the oppression under which his brethren had long groaned, with no eye to look on them in pity, with no arm outstretched for their deliverance. He was willing to come forward as their leader, but he told them plainly he should deal with inhumanity as cowardice, with cruelty of any degree as crime.

He would join them only on the condition that he first placed his master, to whom he was indebted for the very knowledge by which he could benefit his country, beyond the hazards and chances of civil war. Having safely put him on board the vessel which was to convey him to Baltimore, he hastened to the standard of the rebels, determined to prove that barbarity was an enemy to real success, and that cruelty tarnished victory. His effective discipline soon became apparent, and atrocity stood abashed in his presence at the outrages it had committed. It was no easy task to command men who had been roused and made

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suspicious by oppression, who looked on all control as hardship, and ignorantly imagined that idleness only was freedom.

Toussaint's abilities soon raised him to the highest rank. A degree of skill became observable in the movements of the negroes, hitherto unknown to them. Their rifle brigade, well acquainted with the fastnesses of the woods and the caves of the mountains, surprised the enemy; and by his vigorous measures he reduced the Spanish part of the island, and drove the English from its shores.

The society in France called Amis des Noirs, espoused the cause of the democratic party, and Grégoire Brissot, La Fayette, and Robespierre, were its leading members. Thus strengthened, victory followed in the steps of the insurgents; and in a very short time Hayti declared her independence.

At the first dawning of peace, Toussaint set to work, and formed a system of civil policy admirably suited to the character of those stormy times. He endeavoured to encourage agriculture, obliging every Haytian who was not a proprietor, to hire himself as a labourer, without power to withdraw from such service; and though this arrangement seemed very nearly related to slavery in disguise, though the sabre and the musket in the hands of

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a military police were weapons formidable as the driver's whip, Toussaint was the unflinching friend of freedom still. But he found that the labouring population mistook its nature, and that the oppression under which they had for so many years tilled the land caused them to think all agricultural employment but another name for bondage.

If, therefore, surrounded as he was by difficulties, he sometimes erred on the score of undue severity, we must remember it was to gratify no passion, to indulge no caprice; that he was pre-eminently unselfish, and loved to benefit the island he served.

The colony revived under his influence, and advanced rapidly in prosperity during his administration, and by its Central Assembly he was created President of the island for life.

Toussaint had fought against government only as far as it upheld slavery. When, therefore, he thought that the French Republican party had grown cold in the cause he had at heart—when he considered they were unfaithful to their celebrated "Declaration of Rights," with that spirit of independence which was so peculiarly his, he withdrew from them for a while; but when they warmed up from lukewarmness into enthusiasm, and were

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once more zealous champions in the cause of liberty, with the innate nobleness of his nature he asked permission to be again one of their number, and was warmly received by the brave General Laveaux, who was strongly attached to his intelligent negro comrade.

Toussaint was master of the island, and so universally esteemed and respected, that the First Consul on the other side of the ocean, who, whilst he pretended to trample on monarchy, was wading through rivers of life-blood to the throne, became jealous of his power, and sent out his brother-in-law, General Le Clerc, to supersede him.

There was cunning in the messenger employed by Le Clerc to demand Toussaint's surrender.

Cariman, the preceptor of the chieftain's sons, conveyed to him the haughty demand. The boys accompanied him in the embassy, but were to return with Le Clerc if the mission was not accomplished. Locked in each other's embraces, the tears of father and children mingled, but his resolution remained unshaken. "Take back my sons," he said: "I will be faithful to my brethren and to God."

Le Clerc's fleet and army were immediately put into action; a fierce contest ensued, and after a brave resistance, in which even his enemies admired

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his courage, Toussaint was overcome. In the dead of night, when deep sleep had fallen on him, his house was surrounded by a body of French Grenadiers, who, bursting into his chamber, commanded him to surrender. Submission was all that was left to him. There was no unmanly wailing, no nervous tremor. One request only he made.

"The wife of my bosom is harmless," he said; "my little ones are helpless; take me, do with me as you will, only let them remain at home."

But he had to deal with men who knew nothing of the superior nature of their prisoner, who were strangers to all the finer sensibilities of nature, and he was hurried with his family on board the "Hero" man-of-war, which immediately put out to sea.

Some of Toussaint's comrades thronged around him on the shore, but, alas! they lost their lives in their attempt to rescue their chief. Those thought to be attached to his party were confined in dungeons, and many thrown into the ocean.

Toussaint, rigorously guarded in his cabin, was not permitted to have any intercourse with his family. At Brest he had a hurried parting from the wife of his ardent love, which drew tears from the eyes of the veteran sailors standing round. What

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became of her and of her children, has never been revealed.

Toussaint was hurried to the castle of Jaux, and as the severe winter came on was removed to a dungeon at Besançon, the stones of which were literally covered with water. There, without a single friend, without even the luxury of a pillow, in 1803 this brave and great man breathed his last.

During his confinement at Besançon, the following beautiful sonnet was addressed to him by Wordsworth :—

" Toussaint ! Thou most unhappy man of men !
Whether the whistling rustic tends his plough
Within thy hearing, or thou liest now
Buried in some deep dungeon's earless den,
O miserable chieftain ! where and when
Wilt thou find patience ? Yet die not ; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow ;
Though fallen thyself never to rise again,
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee—air, earth and skies,
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee : thou hast great allies,
Thy friends are exultations—agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind ! "

Dessalines, who had also been a slave, and who had shown great courage and skill during the disturbances in Hayti, became after the capture of Toussaint, emperor of the island, under the title

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of James the First; but he retained his dignity only two years.

It was not likely that people who had just broken the fetters of slavery would bend to despotism such as his, so in the year 1800 they rose up and slew him.

Christophe tried the same plan, and found to his cost that it would not answer. He was a man of considerable ability, and no little daring, and he took upon himself the title of Henry the First, king of Hayti. But he could not stand on the pinnacle of power and preserve moderation; the height made him dizzy; his courage degenerated into ferocity, and his firmness of purpose into despotism. His subjects grew discontented, and Petion the president, a man of rigour and understanding, yet withal of gentle and pleasing manners, was far more beloved than he. Petion was not only a good soldier, but a skilful engineer, and had in this capacity rendered essential service to Toussaint, whose very name was dear to the Haytians. He had established a Republic in the southern part of the island; a mutual faith existed between him and his people; and as Christophe's subjects looked on Petion's mild and effective sway, the shadows of discontent deepened in their bosoms.

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When Petion died, they invited his successor, Boyer, to take the management of their affairs. This was too much for Christophe, who, without being actually dethroned, was virtually no longer king. He became nervous and irritable, and finding that even his body-guard was unfaithful to him, on the 8th of October, 1820, he terminated his troubled life by shooting himself through the heart.

Boyer began his rule mildly. In 1826 he promulgated his "Code Rural," by which every negro, the head of a family, became entitled to a grant of land, by the cultivation of which he was to support himself and his household. But he forgot, that even with this regulation in full force, the negro would rest under his plantain-tree; that, satisfied with a few cocoas and the waters of his own blue stream, the spirit of enterprise would never visit his abode. The consequence was, his plan failed.

Petty proprietors thickened around him, and their listless hours betrayed them into crime. Labourers with characters of common honesty were not to be found, and the very neighbourhood of these vagrant landowners became unsafe for the more respectable portion of the community.

There now exists no regular system of govern-

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ment in Hayti. Suluk is the present emperor, but all is incongruity and disorganisation. Its jurisprudence bears, perhaps, more the character of desultory martial law than anything else.

A little sugar is cultivated, but, from the unwise policy of those in power, foreign merchants are only allowed to reside in the eight free ports. Their chief trade is with England, France, Spain, and the United States. Whole tracts of land have, from long neglect, become swampy, and overrun with underwood or bush.

Nearly two hundred years ago, when the Spaniards yielded half the island to France, it advanced rapidly in wealth and population. Fruit-trees were cultivated around the palmetto-thatched cottages, the broad and tattered leaf of the plantain waved in the ocean breeze. Custard-apples, grenadillas, shaddocks, and orange-trees told where the peasant's home was to be found. On the broad savannas, the sugar-cane spread like a verdurous sea; and in the midst of all this industry, you could literally track the path of the Frenchman by flowers. Those which had been allowed to grow unheeded in the woods, no longer wasted their fragrance on the desert air; by careful culture they assumed, amongst the homes of men, a richer and more beautiful appearance.

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The negroes looked with wonder on the Indian creeper, gemming with its tiny ruby blossom the sun-dried thatch of their own abodes, and stood with grotesque gesticulations of delight before the elegantly-arranged bouquets which the French took to market, marvelling that their own wild land was filled with such variety of beauty.

The meadows were filled with lowing herds, and the Spaniards, though much less industrious than their neighbours, were induced to attend to their cattle, as a profitable speculation for satisfying the demands of the French colonists.

A change, indeed, has passed over the country. At the present time, the ignorant proprietors know not what soil is best for the culture of the cane, even if they were inclined to exert themselves to plant it; but they can live without it: and as for pasture-land, the acre round his hut supplies food for his meagre horse, the sorry animal which calls him master. The coffee grows wild at its own sweet will, the berries ripen and drop, and but few care to gather them.

The roads are so bad that cotton goods, cutlery, and earthenware, can only be taken from the coast to the interior by hucksters; and these are generally women, who, sitting under guava-trees during the heat of the day, carry their burden of

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gossip and merchandise from hut to hut during the evening, and support themselves by the small per-centage on their office.

Torrents form for themselves pathways to the sea through the deepest recesses of the mountains, and looking on their silvery course, it is difficult to remember that the life-blood of slaughtered hundreds once dyed with crimson their sparkling waters. The sportive sunbeams illuminate the mountain sides, as if tyranny had never made their strongholds the resort of the persecuted.

The forest shadows sleep so calmly amongst the gigantic trees, it seems almost impossible that cruelty and revenge could have penetrated their depths; and now, in the present languid and desolate state of that great island, the beauty of a tropical climate irradiates its grand scenery, and the everlasting mountains are magnificent in their repose.

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XII.

JAMAICA.

JAMAICA, beautiful Jamaica! stretching out on the broad Caribbean with its towering mountains and massive forests, its fertile plains and fruitful hills. Its very name, which signifies "The land of springs," reminds us of the gentle melody of mountain rivulets, or the bubbling of some silvery cascade far within the enclosure of its own clustering bamboos.

Jamaica, sheltered by Porto Rico, Hayti, and Cuba from the strength of the hurricane, with its invigorating breezes, the morning gifts of the ocean, and the balmy evening air born on its mountain summits, and regularly whispering its nightly message of love to the palms and canes,—Jamaica, given to the world by Columbus, but to Englishmen by the wise and brave Cromwell, thou holdest in thine embrace British hearts

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and homes, and thy mountains and thy vallies are the resting-places of our loved and dead.

On the south-eastern side as you approach the island, the blue mountains rise up in all their magnificence before you. Softened by distance into a deep azure hue, they are distinguished from the lower ranges of hills, which advance gradually to meet them from the verge of the shore on which the city of Kingston stands. These are clothed in luxuriant verdure, and fantastically girdled with fog, which rises like a smoke-wreath from the heart of a deep ravine, or spreads out like a wide purple river, covering everything in its course but some aspiring tree or crag; the eye seems drawn by an invisible power from Kingston harbour and the lowlands around, to rest on the everlasting hills.

A lofty mountain range traverses the island, rising towards the northern coast to the height of seven or eight thousand feet. When these mountains are abrupt and broken into precipices, gigantic trees like the tannen are to be seen, which appear to take root in the rock itself, and spread out their branches over the abyss below. In other places a noisy stream forces its way to the sea, angrily breaking into foam as it dashes over every impediment.

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The scenery amidst the recesses and pinnacles of the mountains assumes in some parts a character of Alpine grandeur, and only wants the addition of snows and glaciers to rival the lower ranges of Switzerland.

Where the mountains wear a milder aspect, they seem by common consent to have withdrawn themselves to make room for spacious vallies, which are watered by gentle rivulets, and interspersed with fragrant groves of the orange and pimento-tree. These rivers glide calmly along, and their banks are occasionally tufted by the feathery bamboo, which waves its ostrich-like plumes over the waters. On the margin of the stream, fragrant and beautiful wild flowers flourish, such as we carefully preserve in our green-houses.

On the gradual descent to the lowlands are extensive fields of the sugar-cane, that elegant reed, of the light and purple flower and arrowy leaf. The milder range of hills is broken into ravines, all covered with foliage, and low white houses are scattered along the coast a little above the margin of the shore, as far as Port Royal.

Look at Jamaica from whatever point of view you may, the grandeur of its scenery forces itself on your notice. View it from the ocean, and how magnificent is its aspect! There are the

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lofty "Blue Mountains," with their summits veiled in clouds.

"Around their waists are forests braced;"

and such forests! dark with the gathered shadows of ages, and impenetrable in many parts from their wild and matted underwood.

Or look at it from its own heights, and what a splendid scene presents itself! Mountains immediately around, forming a bold and intrepid foreground; the far-spreading and beautifully-diversified landscape beyond, stretching out to the distant sea, which like a sheet of silver extends to the far horizon. The greater number of its hills are of a conical form, and although there is no active burning mountain, in Jamaica in some parts of the island there are traces of volcanic eruptions. Even in the highest mountains, springs of delicious water are found, and these are generally impregnated with calcareous earth. Some of these are of a medicinal nature. Perhaps the most celebrated in the island are two sulphureous springs, which give the name of Bath to the village which has risen up around them. They issue in small rills from a cleft in the rock, and are plentifully charged with sulphur and particles of mineral acid. They are considered exceedingly

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beneficial in cutaneous disorders. These springs of fresh water are, however, unequally distributed throughout the island, sometimes clustering together within a very small compass, and then leaving whole districts without their invigorating influence.

The town of Kingston, situated on the southern coast of the island, is the most important commercial city of Jamaica. It runs along the north side of a fine harbour, and descends in a very gentle slope to the verge of the sea.

"By the far off Tropic ocean,
Where the thick surf white as snow,
Flutters on the burning sand-bank,
With a whisper faint and low.

Flutters, trembles, and returning
To its kindred waves again,
Leaving scarce a track or bubble
On the dry and thirsty plain!

By the shore at eve we wandered,
Where the distant mountains stood,
Crimson-stained like veteran soldiers,
In the battle hue of blood!

As if, the dire conflict over,
They had claimed some meed of fame,
And the grateful day had crowned them
With a wreath of golden flame!

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Lowly, making their obeisance,
To the land-breeze as it rose;
Graceful bamboos softly whispered
Goodnight to the bright day's close.

Wafted from the sloping meadows
Of the purple-tufted cane;
Pungent fragrance was borne onward
From the sugar-scented plain!

And the nightingale all loudly,
Thrilled her carol through the air;
Till you might have thought a thousand
Common singing birds were there!

But the deep voice of the ocean
Rose above all sounds of land,
With its symphonies mysterious
That we dimly understand!

And a heart so finely moulded,
And a smile so true and bright,
And a form so brave and comely,
And a soul so full of might.

All were his I loved so dearly,
And he wandered there with me;
Therefore do I prize thus fondly,
That lone ramble by the sea!"

Kingston is backed by semicircular mountains. The streets have a desultory look, and a dusky awning covers the windows of shops, whose commodities, if exposed to view, would not disgrace a Regent Street window. Except on the wharfs,

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where labour takes a more active form, there is nowhere throughout the town to be seen any of that animated traffic which so characterises our English metropolis. A great deal of commerce is nevertheless carried on in Kingston, and its merchants, if they cannot boast the wealth which was once accumulated in that modern Tyre, Port Royal, possess a more honest gain than those who enriched themselves by robbery.

Kingston has some good public edifices. The English Church, standing on an eminence, and overlooking the city, is on the southern side of the square opposite the barracks, which are airy and commodious.

The streets all slope towards the sea, and the houses are enclosed in wide verandahs or piazzas, between which feathery palm-trees are scattered, giving to the town a very tropical appearance.

There is a weary, sun-dried look, in the lowland country surrounding Kingston. The dusty Penguin droops at the road-side, and thirsty Cashaw-trees spread out their horizontal branches beneath the unpitying sun-rays. The penguins are generally used for fences, because their leaves arch backwards, and turn out the prickles. The stalk rises some feet above the foliage; and it is a remarkable fact, that when this plant begins to

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blossom, all the thick leaves deepen into a beautiful scarlet colour at their base. As, however, the fruit, which attains the size of a walnut, and is sharply acid, ripens, this bright hue gradually fades away. The leaves yield a thready substance, not much inferior to hemp. The Spaniards used it for their hammocks, which were noted for strength and elasticity, and it is still made by the island manufacturer into waggon-whips.

You are reminded of the gentle ascent of the Liguanea plains by the more luxuriant appearance of the cane-fields, or perhaps by a cluster of fine trees, which seem in some mysterious way to have inhaled the mountain air, whilst all around them remains toil-worn and weary from the heat of the atmosphere.

So great is sometimes the drought, that when the dry weather has been of long continuance cattle often perish in the road from starvation. The place where they fall is easily discovered by large flocks of carrion crows, who, guided by their strong and peculiar sense of smell, issue from some far-off mountain nook, and flying in throngs through the air literally darken the atmosphere as they hasten to the dead animal.

The Carrion-crow is of the vulture kind, and

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though greatly resembling the turkey, is a repulsive and distorted likeness. Its nostrils are very large, and lined with a loose red skin, which hangs over the upper part of the beak. Its throat is but scantily covered with feathers, and it is no marvel, as it sits gloomily on the bough, that the negroes in their simplicity regard it as a bird of ill omen—the dusky-winged angel of death. The very slightest scent on the air guides it to its putrid feast; and those who watch it eagerly partaking of its unsightly meal, are inclined to forget that these creatures are sent at mercy's bidding to free the atmosphere from the noxious exhalations arising from decayed animal substance; and in such numbers do these birds descend on their prey, that in a few hours nothing but a dry skeleton remains.

About six miles on the inland road you cross a morass, which is a wide extent of low swampy ground, covered with reedy grass and water-withes of many kinds.

The supple-jack and the prickly-pear grow in this tract, and a beautiful red lily stands like a smile in sorrow on the desolate ground.

Towards evening the air in that neighbourhood becomes freighted with a dangerous miasma:

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fever is prevalent; and as in the Pontine Marshes, travellers are urged to accomplish that part of their journey before the fall of day.

In all the large rivers of Jamaica, Alligators are to be found. In form they very much resemble the tiny lizard; so that when the Spaniards first saw them, they gave them the name of *lagarto*. The Englishmen retained the Spanish expression, and called this creature a *lagarto*, which eventually formed itself into the word *alligator*. They sometimes grow to an enormous size, being as much as ten or twelve feet in length. They float on the water like a log of wood, or an old tree that has fallen into the river, and sometimes lie so motionless under the bank, that the cattle go unsuspectingly close to their sides to drink. Nature has, however, given them so powerful a scent of musk, that, generally speaking, animals avoid their haunts. They sustain privation from food for a very considerable length of time; and for days before they go in search of prey, they literally eat nothing, swallowing, it is said, several large stones. They rush on their prey with terrible fury, and, dragging it under the water, speedily stifle it. There they let it remain for some days, and when it is in a state of decomposition they feast on it with amazing voracity.

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They have been known to seize skins hung out in the sun to dry, and these they devour with great satisfaction.

A Spaniard was once washing his tent at the river-side. As soon as he began to toss it about on the stream a large alligator seized it, and dragged it below the water. The poor man, anxious to save his tent, hastily placed between his teeth the butcher's knife with which he was scraping the canvas, and endeavoured with all his strength to save his property. The huge creature being angry at this opposition, let go the tent, sprang upon its owner, and dragging him into the water, endeavoured to stifle him. In this extremity the Spaniard remembered his knife, and giving the alligator several wounds in its body, succeeded in killing it.

Many years ago a negro nurse wandered with her infant charge too near the river. The child was just old enough to admire its bright red shoes, and as she was calling on her nurse to look at their sparkling steel clasps, an alligator sprang from the bank, and in a moment dragged the fairy creature under the dark tide. There was not time to call for help. In an instant the animal had disappeared with its prey. The poor woman could with difficulty give anything like a coherent

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account of the awful disaster to the distracted parents, who, with the vain hope of finding the body of their child, had the river searched. Sometime after, the alligator was discovered and killed, and on being opened nothing was found in its stomach but a small remnant of the white worked frock, and the glistening shoe-buckles unimpaired in brilliancy.

It is said that this creature, when caught very young, may be tamed. It lays its eggs in the sand, generally in the month of April, and the birds finding out their place of concealment often destroy them. If, however, the alligator perceive the approach of a large flock of birds, it is said by writers of perhaps more credulity than science, that she will swallow her eggs, bringing them up again when the danger is over. The little creatures make their way to the water almost as soon as hatched, sporting with their mother at the river side the very moment they have strength to do so; but multitudes of these infant alligators are destroyed by vultures and various kinds of fish.

Their teeth are very white, and toys and ornaments are made of them. Those persons who have tasted their flesh affirm it is tender and delicious. The Indians constantly used it as an article of sustenance.

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XIII.

JAMAICA.

SPANISH TOWN, AND SCENERY AROUND.

SPANISH TOWN was founded about the year 1520, by Diego the son of Columbus; and in the cathedral church which he built were bells, said to have been made from the copper of the island. The plain on which the town stands rises in gentle ascent from the Rio Cobre; and towards the south the prospect is magnificently bounded by mountains. This place, though of trifling commercial importance, is the seat of government. The Queen's House, which stands in the square, is a stately structure, built partially of brick, and its white marble columns, give it an imposing appearance. Facing this is the House of Assembly, where the island Legislature holds its miniature House of Commons; and at the extreme end of the same

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line of buildings, the Members of the Council, to whom a Colonial rank is attached, transact the business of the country, with all the aristocratic importance of England's House of Lords.

In the centre of the square, which is neatly enclosed by an iron railing, there is a statue of Lord Rodney, in memorial of his services to the island; and opposite this is a fine bust of Charles Lord Metcalfe, Jamaica's late deservedly beloved and excellent governor, beautifully chiselled by our great living sculptor, E. H. Baily.

From a silvery jet d'eau in the midst of this square the sparkling waters fall into a stone basin, round whose margin bright flowers cluster. The middle walk is covered by a network of the Grenadilla vine; its pale passion-flower occasionally appearing amongst the green leaves. The South Sea Rose, the Arabian jasmin, the snowy Datura, the delicate tropical Lilac, and many other flowering trees, are there kept magically green in the midst of drought, by the water-works lately established in the town. The streets are laid out with some regularity, but they are unpaved and narrow, and there is a character of desolation impressed on the whole aspect of the place. Few white people are seen in the streets during the

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day; only under the arcades of the public buildings in the square, gentlemen may be occasionally observed in animated groups, discussing some commercial or political subject.

During the sessions of the Legislature, however, all the principal families of the island assemble in Spanish Town; and like a fresh green branch unexpectedly bursting from a grey and mouldering trunk, a sudden mirthfulness appears in the place; sprightly *soirées* follow each other in rapid succession; and those who have all the morning been engaged in some important political debate, grace the sumptuous entertainment at the Queen's House in the evening, with brows from which care has at least for the time disappeared, and enter into the gaiety of the ball-room with as much earnestness as if the welfare of a nation depended on the amount of their enjoyment.

A ball at the Queen's House would, in truth, be no bad subject for the artist. The spacious rooms are brilliantly lighted, and the night-scented flowers pour in their rich breath through the open verandahs. On the gallery wall stands the old clock, whose grey and time-worn appearance is on a festal evening softened by some glossy wreath of evergreen.

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" There lies far off on the southern waves
An island fair and bright;
Where the sun's clear ray,
Through the glowing day
As the smile of love is light;
Where darkness dares not spread its pall,
E'en on the brow of night!

In an old grey town, the Spaniards built,
Some long, long years ago;
Is a spacious hall,
With a mould-stained wall,
And a marble porch like snow:
That blushes and burns as a maiden's cheek,
At the sunset's ardent glow!

With a gallery wide, and circling round,
Is a room of some hundred feet;
And gathering there,
With mysterious air,
The members of council meet;
For the little parliament of that land
In the old hall hath its seat!

And the clock goes on to tell the hours,
In the face of each busy man;
It strikes them out,
With triumphant shout,
As loud as ever it can:
For its hands are in league with time, they say,
And record an age as a span

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Time is stronger than wisdom far,
And the old clock warns aloud;
But what care they,
With the locks of grey,
In that mysterious crowd?
Oh! more than the young do they count on life,
Those who with age are bowed!

When night descends from the purple hills,
And fragrance and dews abound;
The lights in that hall,
Gleam for festival;
And the band hath a martial sound;
And the old clock looks from its panelled height
On the youthful with garlands crowned!

Of the hour, the minute, when lovers' vows
Are breathed in the orange shade,
I know that clock,
With a tick and knock,
Hath a faithful record made;
So fleet those moments,—to look on its face
The maiden was half afraid!

And gleaming there, with its iron heart,
So rigid, and stern, and cold;
It ticketh aloud,
To the thoughtless crowd,
Saying, life, like a tale that is told,
Will soon be o'er—but to them it seems
That present cannot grow old!

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It stands there now, and the white moonlight
Pours in on its polished frame;
And the still small note,
From its metal throat,
Is whispering just the same;
But they take no heed—for now, as then
Old Time hath an ugly name!

I see it oft in my dreams, that clock
Looking down on the youthful band,
On the brave and the strong,
And the same old song,
It chimes with a face so bland,
A song of caution,—ah, vainly sung,
For few will understand!

And then the beauty gathered there! The fair young creatures, untouched by sorrow, all radiant with enjoyment. The airy and graceful dress, too, of the tropical maiden, is not without its effect. Her manners are influenced by that spirit of unreserve which is so conspicuous in West Indian society. Restraint and etiquette are not put aside, but they become subordinate. An intelligent modesty takes the place of monotonous coldness, and the fleeting hours glide pleasantly on in sprightly converse with the delicate Jamaica girl.

Much is said of the sallow complexions of those who have lived, even for a short time, between the tropics; but a transparent fairness, on which the

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rose is scarcely discernible, is all that distinguishes them from the ruddy lasses of the North: yet, in spite of all this, they retain, so to speak, a more flower-like appearance than their transatlantic sisters.

Young mothers frequent these evening assemblies, distinguished only from their girlish companions by a gravity which hangs gracefully around them, and is not at all out of keeping with youth and loveliness. The bride may be seen with a living, breathing, orange-wreath round her dark locks; and the myrtle-blossoms, so dexterously wrought by the skill of some Parisian artificer, is needless there: for its place is supplied by the natural blossom, which, with the dew shaken from its flower-sprays, circles the high pale brow of some thoughtful but animated girl. Dissipation can never be connected with these entertainments. They resemble the gathering together in social familiarity of some large family, and bear a very distinct character from that of the English ball.

We will venture to say, that friendships formed in the West Indies are not easily blotted from memory's tablet. The associations connected with them are constantly stirred up by the events around us, and in the midst of London bustle, a

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wandering flower-scent, a purple evening cloud, or a tone of music, take our hearts at will.

> " Our thoughts, like swallows, skim the main,
> And bear our spirits back again,"

to the far-off islands, sleeping calmly on the broad blue bosom of the Caribbean Sea.

Some of the old houses in Spanish Town, in order to secure them from being overthrown by earthquakes, were underlaid with beams of the lignum vitæ, a tree of hard wood and a glossy evergreen, noted for retaining its verdure through intense drought. Its beautiful blue flowers, sustained only by the night dew, will flourish and brighten the desolate country around, when there has been no rain for months.

The present Cathedral Church was built in the year 1720, on the site of the old one, which fell in the great earthquake of 1692. The style of its architecture is simple. It is built in the form of a cross. The marble font stands in the middle. Green trees shadow the windows on each side of the altar, and the softened light steals reverently in on the old monumental stones.

> " Soft holy shadows round me brood,
> Whene'er I kneel to pray;
> I think of a church in a tropic land
> Some thousand leagues away.

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A church where Palm-trees gently wave,
Before the deep-stained glass,
And throw a strange fantastic shade
On the sun-rays as they pass.

Sweet-scented from the sugar-fields
Comes in the wandering air,
But softened to a whispering tone,
Within the house of prayer!

God's gentle messenger who read
The page of sacred lore;
Has calmly slept in an English grave,
Some two long years or more!

And he who prayed beside me,
His dear hand locked in mine,
With a soft, and solemn, and tender look,
Long on my heart to shine.

He left me as a legacy,
To sanctify the past,
High, holy thoughts, that rise and blend
With the shadows round me cast."

There are some curious epitaphs in that cathedral. The oldest of these, which is graven on the pavement of the altar-piece, is not satisfied with boasting of the dust that lies beneath it, but triumphantly goes on to say that the immortal part of man is imprisoned there. It is as follows:—"Mistake not, reader: not only the deceased remains of the Honourable Sir Thomas Modyford,

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Bart., but, even the soul and life of all Jamaica, lie here."

The country round Spanish Town is exceedingly flat; the pasture-grounds are fenced by the spear-leafed penguin, intermixed with occasional trees. Sometimes a logwood-tree rises to the height of about twenty feet, with its pale yellow flowers shining like stars through its glossy dark leaves. Its hard wood, of a deep orange colour, is famous for the dye it produces, and is annually exported to England in great quantities. In contrast to this is the Braziletto-tree, with its slender prickly branches and delicate white flowers; whilst now and then a large Tamarind-tree with its small and elegant foliage, reminds one of England's Mountain ash. It is very closely related to the Sensitive plant; and it is said that its leaves close at sunset, to preserve it from the fall of the plentiful dew. The pulp of the fruit in which the leaves are enclosed contains a great deal of acid, and is used for medicinal purposes; and the beverage made from the tamarind pod is too well known to require description.

"The damsel from the tamarind-tree
Plucks its acid fruit,
And steeps it in water long;
And whoso drinks this cooling draught
He cannot wish for wine!"

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Occasionally a cocoa-nut tree stands up alone, but looks thirsty and weary. Then again the country, for miles, is given up to the dominion of the cashaw; and in dry weather the sea breeze is liberal of its gift of dust to the foliage.

We must not forget to mention a magnificent Silk-cotton tree, which forms a beautiful and refreshing canopy over the wide and dusty road between Spanish Town and Kingston. Its trunk has long attracted the notice of travellers, and is between twelve and fourteen feet in circumference. Canoes capable of containing 150 men have been made by hollowing out the stem of a large cotton-tree. The cotton-tree sparrows build their nests at the extremities of some of the large horizontal limbs of this tree. They do not, however, look like nests, but have the appearance of heaps of trash flung on the boughs, and for this reason are not easily discovered. These sparrows give to the very early morning their soft but musical whistle, and are generally silent throughout the day. The eaves of the cotton-tree fall annually, at which time it presents a curious contrast to the dense foliage of the forest around. Then the buds appear on the naked boughs in large tufts, and these are succeeded by pale yellow flowers devoid of fragrance. After this the foliage bursts forth

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and the fruit follows: this is about the size of a swan's egg, and when quite ripe it gently opens, exhibiting a light fawn-coloured silky cotton, which is full of small round seeds. This species of cotton is considered unfit for the loom,—the wool being so firmly attached to the seeds that it is tedious and troublesome to separate it,—and its value when in a state of preparation for the market is not equivalent to the labour which must necessarily be bestowed on it. When the leaves are young and tender, the negroes boil them for vegetables, and they are mucilaginous like ochro. When this magnificent tree falls into decay, it is said to become a nest for the Macocco beetle, whose caterpillar fried is considered by many persons to be one of the greatest delicacies in the world.

The road in a northerly direction from Spanish Town, called "Sixteen-Mile Walk," is, from its peculiar beauty, shown to strangers. After crossing a savanna five miles in length, you approach a large cliff, under which the Rio Cobre noisily rushes, as if in a state of excitement, from the passage it has just made through a deep ravine. You then pass on by the first projection of the mountains, which are clothed with noble trees, and in some parts covered by detached masses of calcareous rock, and these rise up before you like

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the gray ruins of embattled walls. The road is cut through the mountains, but the river following close on its course, leaves only a narrow space for this dark and romantic path.

In most places the cliffs are covered with wood and ferns, and flowering mosses of all kinds gleam out in the sober light. Sometimes large fragments of disjointed rock lie in the river, and all around these the waters break into white foam. Then again, where the scenery is very sombre, light creeping flowers hang down in pearly network from the uppermost boughs of some dark tree; or a beautiful water-lily unfolds, and without any sunlight at all stands bright in its own scarlet hues.

On the left, as you proceed, are overhanging rocks, which threaten every moment to fall on the pathway; whilst on the other side the mountains recede, and present to the view, through a wild and rocky frame-work, green cane-fields and undulating hills, gently rising one above the other, towards the ridges in the middle of the island.

The ascent of Mount Diabolo is wearisome and steep, but the view from its height is extensive and beautiful. On one side are sombre forests; in the other direction, a land of rich pastures spreads out before you. Cattle are to be seen

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browsing in luxuriant Guinea-grass fields, and the sloping mountain-meadows are richly adorned with tufts of the bamboo. This gigantic reed is a native of the East Indies, and is of more use to the Chinese than to the West Indian. It is well known that the former split its canes into rope, and that the rigging of the Chinese junks is made of bamboo cordage. The passing wind has a peculiar whisper amongst its narrow leaves; and they richly ornament the land on which they cluster.

The road winding along the banks of the Rio Cobre runs sometimes on the very brink of tremendous precipices. Beneath, you hear the waters battling with large masses of rock, which intercept their current, whilst shadowy trees apparently springing from the very cliff, veil and soften the dangers of the way.

A solitary broken arch, the remains of a bridge, which the impetuosity of the river never allowed to be completed, juts out from the road, beautified by a covering of fair and fragile flowers, amongst which a peculiar species of convolvulus delicately streaked with purple, is very conspicuous. Even after you leave the river, the narrow pathway threads the edges of deep ravines.

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Wide mountain-chasms, from which the waters appear to have withdrawn, occasionally yield to wide savannas of the liveliest verdure, now rising, now gently falling, and now covered with forests.

The golden logwood fills the air with fragrance, and the white-flowered ironwood and the beautiful lignumvitæ are its companions.

Close to our path the Bearded fig-tree spreads out, as it were in the wilderness, its temple not made with hands. There are no stained windows necessary to add to the beautiful effect of its lightly-columned aisles, which are mellowed into a twilight of the softest green by the luxuriant foliage. From the branches of this tree, thin filaments descend like pieces of cord, and these, when they reach the ground, take root, and gradually become firm stems, so that in time one of these trees forms of itself a grove. And this appears still more extraordinary when we recollect that it is at first but an insignificant tendril plant running along the ground at our feet, and unable to rise at all but by the assistance of some rock or bough.

If the supporting tree be of a delicate nature, it soon perishes in the wiry embrace of this soft-looking creeper, which craftily sends down its

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filaments to take root in the earth, and then, conscious of its own strength, throws off its dependency, changes its very nature, and is no longer the humble parasite, but the forest king. It is as common in the East as in the West, and is sometimes called the banyan, or sacred tree.

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XIV.

JAMAICA.

MAMMEE RIVER—MOUNTAIN CAVE.

THE waterfall on Mammee River is another wonder of nature. The stream has its source amidst the Blue Mountains, and continues its agitated course to the hills just above the sandy shore in Bull Bay. It is there that between the naked mountains it has an abrupt fall of 200 feet. This is grand enough, but by no means the most magnificent part of the picture.

Suddenly the course of the stream is altered by a huge rock, which projects from the western precipice. It becomes foamy and tumultuous at this sudden interruption; its voice of many waters grows loud, and clouds and vapours encircle it, bearing on their misty surface in beautiful succession every colour of the rainbow, whilst arrowy sunbeams darting through them, remind

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us of the scenes presented to our view in the fairy tales of childhood.

Hundreds of blue butterflies sport around, apparently within reach of the dangerous torrent, paying their homage perhaps to some purple flowers which trail luxuriantly on the flat ground a little beyond.

There is something solemn in the scene. Every softer sound of nature is drowned by the noisy cataract, and the solitude brooding on all around becomes almost oppressive. Those who only traverse Jamaica's high-roads, beautiful and romantic as they are in many places, know nothing of those spots of beauty which lie concealed in the heart of its mountains, or of the grandeur and density of those original forests which retain all the wildness of primitive nature.

A little beyond the fall of Mammee River is a most curious cascade; it is formed by one of the branches of the Rio Alto, which having forced its way for many miles underground, rises in the hills between Roaring River plantation and Montego Bay in St. Anne's. The mountains in that part of the island are composed of stalactite matter, and incrustate bodies which have been for any length of time in them.

This river rises far above the level of the sea,

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sometimes passing through narrow rocky defiles, and then again spreading out over a wider space, it becomes much less rapid in its descent.

In the midst of this watery pathway is a curious and beautiful grove of anchovy pear-trees. They are common in Jamaica, and love the river-side; but it is not usual to see them with their large oval leaves and clustering blossoms throwing out their roots in the waters. The effect is singular. The stream, retarded by them, has from time to time deposited its crusty load around; and there are platforms as of shining granite, and crystal banks, and pearl-wrought arcades, spreading out under and above these waters: and all this is overshadowed by hoary old trees, whose heavy boughs as they fall from age become, in their turn, incrusted, and add to the wonders of the descending stream. Many aromatic shrubs are in this neighbourhood; and the plaintive note of the peadove is heard in the woods, till it seems as if the spirit of solitude had found voice and spoke.

Some miles beyond this cascade, there is a remarkable Cave. It is situated at the side of a hill, by which a mountain stream, the child of rain and storm, descends into the valley below. It has a wide entrance, but grows narrow as you advance, and then separates into a number of

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small caverns, which, from the effect of the light on numerous stalactite incrustations around, seem enclosed within agate gates, or adorned with shining marble porticos. As you look back, Corinthian pillars appear to be standing on each side of the long aisle; the atmosphere around is tinted with bluish green; bats flit about flapping their dusky wings before your face with unusual courage, as if they intended to remind you they were the lords of that rocky domain; and toads and croaking lizards hold some situation of importance in that dingy cavern. On the northern side of this great mountain the road descends into the fertile valley of the Moneague, and the rich green dingles, the cultivated mountain sides, remind one of the scenery in the northern part of Devonshire.

All round the neighbourhood of St. Anne's Bay there is an appearance of careful cultivation. It was here that the great Columbus first landed, and a large cave near the shore is shown to travellers, in which it is said he contrived to conceal his vessel for some time from the Indians.

Sugar-cane fields spread out for miles, and the neat hedges at the road-side consist principally of logwood-trees, which bear a great resemblance to the English hawthorn. As the road ascends,

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you meet with fragrant groves of the rich pimento. There is, perhaps, scarcely a more beautiful tree than this. In grandeur it has many rivals; but there is something so striking in its whole appearance, that one turns from more magnificent trees to look at it again and again. It is indigenous to the island, and grows luxuriantly without care or cultivation. The trunk is of a silvery grey, and the deep green leaves closely resemble in texture and colour those of our English laurel. The luxuriant white blossoms gem, as with many pearls, the dark foliage; and the sea-breeze wins from it, by its softest whisper, a rich aromatic fragrance. As the woods approach the mountain summits, these trees become more diminutive, but in many parts of the island, even when thus elevated, they retain a considerable degree of magnificence.

Mocking-birds, well known by the name of the Jamaica nightingale, are ever busy amongst the branches of the pimento-tree with their choral song. Throughout the bright moonlight night, the little band continues its performance, and the effect of these strains on the stillness around may be more easily imagined than described. This tropical nightingale has a most extraordinary faculty of imitation; not only will it take the

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songs of other birds for its own, but it has been known to imitate the melody of a flute, and with some degree of success. Though this little creature pours its melody freely on the bright and sunny day, it certainly gives to the moonlight its richest, softest tones; but as Mr. Hill observes, "he does not at this solemn hour indulge in songs of mimicry; the music is all his own."

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XV.

JAMAICA.

COMING DOWN OF THE GULLEYS—FALMOUTH—EARTHQUAKE AT PORT ROYAL.

It is curious to watch a tropical shower suddenly descending from the mountains. There has perhaps been no rain for some time, and the land all around is sun-dried and weary, but the cloud descends and melts into a shower, pattering noisily on the orange-trees before you; still you stand on dry ground for a moment or two ere the falling drops reach you.

The coming down of the gulleys, too,—the name given by the negroes to the descent of the unexpected mountain-torrent,—is a striking feature in the character of tropical scenery. These streams force for themselves a path from the summit of the mountains, and sweeping through the plains after crossing the road at one's feet, rush with

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foam and spray into the ocean. When there has been a long drought, their course is observable only by a deep sandy fissure, in which are large pieces of detached rock, withered boughs, tangled in a bright net-work of wild convolvuluses, and fragments of the partially-decayed trunks of trees. If there has been heavy rain in the mountains, though the weather continue sultry and dry in the lowlands, all intercourse between the towns is suspended, for the tiny brooklet over which you may have stepped in the morning has become a foaming, boiling river, hurrying with its voice of many waters to the sea. The negroes, are well skilled in the "signs of the clouds," and earnestly bid you hasten on the way when the mountain brows grow dark, and a peculiar mist mingles with their shadows. "Hi, massa," they will say; "you no see rain how him 'tand up there waiting to catch massa; massa must pull foot, or gully will come down for true."

We had some experience of the unexpected descents of these cataracts. Early one morning we left home to spend the day in the neighbourhood of Kingston; everything around us was soon bathed in sunlight, and under the influence of the vertical rays, the shadows of the trees became towards mid-day so small, that it was

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a relief to turn the eye towards the mountains in the distance, and to observe the heaven's deep blue yielding to a gentle shade of neutral tint. During the afternoon there was distant thunder, but the sunlight continued stedfast, and though a few clouds were in the distance, they seemed woven more of mist than of rain. What was our surprise, then, as we were returning home in the evening, to find the gentle sandy descent, through which we had passed only a few hours before, a noisy river, rushing across our road to the deep. There had been rain in the mountains; the "gully had come down," and to reach home that night was impossible.

At another time, when the heaven was clear and cloudless, we were passing through one of these sandy torrent beds, when we were startled by a rushing sound. The negro driver exclaimed, "Gulley come down," and eagerly urged on the horses. The frightened animals, as if aware of their danger, scrambled up the bank; another moment, and we were safe; but the torrent swept by, in the place we had just left, with whole trees lying uprooted on its muddy surface.

Falmouth is a pleasant sea-port town, stretching out on the borders of the ocean. It is embosomed in palms, with dark citrons and snowy

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blossoming orange-trees clustering together in its shrubs. A line of steam-packets has for some little time been established between Montego Bay, the chief commercial town on the northern coast of Jamaica, and Kingston, its great southern metropolis.

Port Royal presents a lively scene when the little steamers are floating over its transparent waters, pouring out a volume of white vapour, in striking contrast, against the dark woodlands, or sending the dusky smoke-wreath far out on the sunny atmosphere. The ancient town of Port Royal was built on a bank of sand which adhered to a rock in the sea, and it was perhaps on this account that it was utterly destroyed by one of those terrible earthquakes which are sometimes so severely felt in the West India Islands.

The catastrophe at Port Royal is now almost a forgotten thing, or remembered only as a fact of history; the hearts wrung with terror and anguish are now silent in the grave; and it is perhaps only when on board ship in that harbour, looking down on the tops of the sunken houses, which can still be seen far down in the transparent waters, that we remember such things were. The Buccaneers at that time made their rendezvous at Port Royal; it was the treasury of their ill-

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gotten wealth; for they were in truth pirates, notorious for their daring deeds of cruelty and injustice. It was almost noon, and cloudless; the wharfs were loaded with merchandize; groups of care-worn looking men were considering whether the gain of to-morrow would equal that of to-day, when suddenly a voice was heard, not in the heavens but under the earth, the land reeled, the mountains trembled, the sea heard it and fled, and then rushed in again on the land, and stood five fathoms deep, where a moment before the glittering treasures of Peru and Mexico had been displayed. Large masses of sand rolled in on the houses, like waves of the ocean. There were shrieks and groans, and frantic calls on heaven for mercy. The earth was rent asunder like paper, and whole streets were entombed in the yawning gulf. Many persons thus suddenly buried were violently thrown out again, whilst others were swallowed up to the neck and strangled, from the earth closing around them.

The Swan frigate, at that time in Port Royal harbour, was driven in on the town by the force of the waters, providentially affording a way of escape for many; but of that wealthy port, so rich in gold and silver and precious stones, in less than a quarter of an hour from the com-

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mencement of the earthquake, not a vestige remained. Many buildings in Kingston were overthrown. The old cathedral church in Spanish Town was destroyed, and over the whole island a most extraordinary change passed; mountains became rivers, and rivers dry land. Putrifying bodies floated about the harbour of the engulphed town, and came up in shoals on the moist margin of the sea, till the air was frightfully charged with noxious exhalations.

A dreadful epidemic followed the earthquake, to which about three thousand persons fell victims.

More than 150 years have passed since this desolating calamity filled so many hearts with terror and anguish, but the anxieties of that fearful day seem in a measure to be brought out from the twilight of the past as we read the following letter from a clergyman who resided at Port Royal, to his friend in England, dated a few days after the occurrence of that fearful event:—

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I doubt not but that you will, both from papers and letters, hear of the great calamity which has befallen the island, by a terrible earthquake on the 7th instant (June), which has thrown down

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almost all the houses, churches, mills, and bridges throughout the whole country; it has rent rocks and mountains and destroyed whole plantations; but Port Royal had much the greatest share, in the wisdom of God.

"I will therefore be more particular in giving you an account of the proceedings in that place, that you may know what my danger was, and how unexampled my preservation.

"On Wednesday the 7th of June, I had been at church reading prayers, which I did every day since I was Rector of Port Royal, to keep up some shew of religion amongst a most ungodly and debauched people. I was gone to a place, hard by the church, where the merchants used to meet, and where the President of the Council was, who was now chief, till we had a new governor, who came into my company and engaged me to drink a glass of wormwood with him as a whet before dinner. He being my very great friend, I sat with him, upon which he lighted a pipe of tobacco, which he was pretty long a taking, and not being willing to leave him until it was out, he detained me from going to dinner to one Captain Rodon, where I was to dine, and who upon the first eruption, was sunk into the earth, and then into the sea, with his wife and family;

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and had I gone to dine with him, I had been lost.

"But to return to the president and his pipe of tobacco. Before it was out, I found the ground reeling and moving under my feet; upon which I said to him, 'What is this, sir?' 'It is only an earthquake,' he replied, in the coolest manner possible, but the next moment with a tremendous crash the church-tower fell down, on which we ran out into the street, where I lost him, and made towards Morgan's Pen, it being an open place, and I thought to be secured from the falling houses as I made towards it. I saw the earth open and swallow up multitudes of people; and the sea, mountains high, rushed in over the fortifications. I then laid aside all thoughts of escaping, and resolved to make towards my own lodging, there to meet death in as good a posture as I could. From the place where I was, I was forced to cross and run through two or three narrow streets, the houses and walls fell on each side of me, the bricks came rolling to my feet, but none hurt me. When I came to my lodgings, I found all things in the same order as I left them, not a picture, of which there were several fair ones in my chamber, being out of its place. I went to the balcony to view the street in which

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the house stood, and saw never a house door broken nor the ground so much as cracked. The people seeing me there, cried out to me to come and pray with them. When I came into the street every one laid hold of my clothes, and embraced me, through fear and kindness. I was almost stifled, and persuaded them at last to make a large ring and kneel down. I prayed with them near an hour, when I was almost faint from the heat of the sun and from exercise. They then brought me a chair, the earth working all the while with slow motion like the rolling of the sea; insomuch that when I was at prayer I could hardly keep myself upon my knees. By this time I had been half an hour setting before them their sins and hideous provocations, and seriously exhorting them to repentance. Then came some merchants of the place who desired me to go aboard some ship in the harbour to refresh myself. Taking me there, they had gotten a boat to carry me off; so coming to the sea which had entirely swallowed up the wharf, with all those goodly brick houses upon it, most of them as fine as those in Cheapside, with entire streets beyond, I looked down on the tops of houses which lay under the surface of the water."

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Another letter written a day or two after the earthquake, gives a graphic description of the havoc wrought by that dreadful catastrophe:—

"Waving all other private and particular concerns," the writer says, "you will give me leave at this time to present you with an account of a late dismal calamity and judgment which hath befallen us here in this country by a terrible earthquake which God sent upon us at a quarter past eleven o'clock, on the 7th of June, as most say, for one quarter of an hour, but in my opinion not more than six or seven minutes, in which time it overthrew all the brick and stone buildings in the country, whereof several were in my own parish, which now are either levelled with the ground, or standing monuments of the wrath of God, and so shattered and torn, that they are irreparable. While these were tumbling down, the earth opened in my parish in multitudes of places; so that it made our gulleys run on a sudden, though before exceedingly dry; insomuch that some were afraid of being overwhelmed at once by the river and the sea joined together to swallow up the country; these gaping mouths being no less than twelve, twenty, or more feet deep under the earth.

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"One noted town, St. Jago de la Vega, or Spanish Town, is utterly down to the ground, with its church devoured in the same ruins.

"Our magazine and only store-house of Port Royal is three parts swallowed up in the sea, ships and shallops now riding at anchor, where great numbers of fine fabrics have been not long since.

"Many very eminent merchants, before worth thousands, are now worth scarce more than the linen on their backs; several are dead, either overwhelmed with their houses, or drowned in the sea which flowed in suddenly upon them. Many, whilst flying from the sea, were devoured by the earth with her gaping jaws. A whole street, which we call the wharf, where most of the noted merchants lived, and where much of the planters' goods was landed, more especially sugar and cotton, sunk at once from one end to the other with a general crack at the very beginning of the earthquake, together with two forts, guns, &c. built thereupon, and what is more dreadful, all those poor wretches perished who were either upon or nigh it, without any warning; and presently after this, whilst the people were in the greatest horror and consternation, neither having time to fly, nor thoughts where to fly for safety, two or three more streets in their whole

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length tottered and fell, and were immediately sunk, land and all, deep into the sea.

"All the upper part of the town, together with the church, and all above towards the Palisadoes, is under water; even the Palisadoes itself, where their burying place was, is now no longer earth but sea.

"Immediately upon the cessation of the earthquake, your heart would abhor to hear of the depredations, robberies, and violences that were in an instant committed upon the place by the vilest and basest of the people. No man could call anything his own, for they that were strongest and most wicked seized what they pleased, and whose they pleased, and where they pleased, without any regard to propriety. Gold and silver, jewels, plate, and goods, all were their own, that they could or would lay hands on. Nothing but breaking open of houses, rushing into shops and taking what they pleased before the owners' faces, forcing money from people in the open streets as they were carrying it along to a place of safety, succeeded the horrors of this dreadful time, whilst others in canoes, wherries, ship-boats, &c. were plundering chests and boxes of what they could find upon the water."

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XVI.

JAMAICA.

BUCCANEERS.

AMONGST the Buccaneers who visited Port Royal, was the famous Sir Henry Morgan, afterwards Governor of the island. He was a man conspicuous for savage courage and unbridled cruelty, rising into notice simply because he was successful—and encouraged, because he was feared. He was a native of Wales, and belonged to the junior branch of the Morgans of Tredegap family. The agricultural pursuits of a country life did not suit the young man; so he left his father to superintend the management of the hay-fields, and the storing of the corn-sheafs, and urged on by a restless craving for excitement, wandered to Bristol, where, binding himself as apprentice for four years to the master of a small vessel lying in the Avon, he sailed for Barbadoes.

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He was active and energetic, and as soon as his time for servitude had expired, he sailed for Jamaica, being tempted to visit that island by the account of the wealth which he heard was to be acquired there. Not that Morgan was anxious to enrich himself or cared for possession; the charm for him consisted in the tumultuous way of obtaining these spoils so in accordance with his restless and undisciplined character.

Shortly after his arrival there, war was declared against the Spaniards at Port Royal. This of itself opened the door for Morgan to step into notice. He made several successful cruises, securing each time a share of the spoil. There was a grave kind of austerity about him which held him back from the improvidences and excesses of his companions, and not yet was his heart seared, not yet were his perceptions darkened by the familiar association with cruelty and crime. He lived moderately, and obtained sufficient money to purchase a share in a small craft, of which his associates unanimously elected him as master. Away then, over the foamy billows, sailed Morgan, taking success by the hand at the very onset of his career, for he returned from the Bay of Campeachy with many prizes.

But who can live amongst flames and remain

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unscorched? The evil influences of his lawless companions concealed from his view the crimes that darkened their deeds. The bravery of the Welsh youth merged into the ferocity of the sin-hardened man.

Mansfeldt, the great pirate chieftain, was preparing an expedition against the Spaniards, and who so fit to be admiral as Morgan! His first action at St. Catherine's was victorious, and the fearless intrepidity of his attack on Puerto Pontin was not soon forgotten. Sailing quietly with his men up the river, he anchored his boats before the town. His first act on landing was to secure the sentinel who, thoughtless of danger, was drowsily walking to and fro at the outskirts of the city. Then he stormed the place at the very mouth of its guns, and with such violence that all resistance was useless. The night was dark with every appearance of coming storm, and this but aggravated the horrors of that fearful assault. The inhabitants starting from deep sleep, and in many instances not even recognising their enemy, were immediately put to the sword. The mother had not time to run to the rescue of her little ones, nor the wife to call on her husband for aid.

Morgan hurried many of his prisoners at the point of the sword into one of the castle dungeons,

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then fired the magazine, and their bodies were scattered in a thousand pieces on the midnight air. We can only plead for Morgan that he lived at a time when lenity was considered weakness, when moderation was called pusillanimity, when ferocity was held up to admiration as a manly virtue, and when the voice of applause was measured by the cruelty which accompanied the deed. Then the assailants rifled churches and houses. Age, womanhood and helpless infancy had no pity at their hands.

The Spaniards on their knees begged for mercy, but conquest did not satisfy this pirate chief who revelled in carnage, and murdered like sheep those from whom he had taken all power of resistance. Morgan and his men returned to Jamaica with silver and gold and precious stones, from the ruby even to the diamond; and the old papers of that day state, that heaps of plate and other rich effects were literally piled beneath the eaves of the houses in Port Royal for want of warehouse room. Yet Morgan and his piratical band loved this stormy life for its own sake, and not for the wealth it brought them. The love of money had little to do with their daring deeds of injustice.

The treasures they had seized soon passed into

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other hands, and Morgan and his dauntless crew, after a few weeks of mad intemperance, again set forth on their wild and lawless exploits. A thousand desperate men attached themselves to this chieftain, and the Oxford frigate commanded by Captain Collier, was sent out by Charles the Second to aid in the war against the Spaniards, and joined Captain Morgan's little fleet.

Whilst at the Isle de Vache, a council of war was held on board this vessel; and during dinner time, when all the officers were sitting round the table, by some unknown accident it blew up, destroying in a moment, two hundred and fifty men. Though death was so busy on one side of the table, those on the other side remained uninjured, and Admiral Morgan with many of his friends were amongst those who thus marvellously escaped from injury.

At many seiges and sackings and stormings, the Admiral's courage was conspicuous, if that ever deserves the name of real bravery which unites itself to cruelty. But success attended him, and the prizes he won threw a veil over his ferocity, or at all events made plausible for the time, actions from which, if undisguised, correct principles would turn in disgust. It is true he broke no treaties, he entered into no cunningly-

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devised agreements, escaping from the covenant through some loophole insidiously kept out of view; but he never acknowledged the great principle of brotherhood, and all those over whom power gave him the ascendency, he regarded as lawful victims.

The inhabitants of Port Royal were just the people to admire such a man as Admiral Morgan. He brought them wealth; he joined in their lawless revelry, and led the way in every scene of tumultuous sin. About this time he was made a naval commander in the service of King Charles; and his first exploit, after this, was that of burning Panama to the ground. Rivers of molten gold ran down the pavements of the streets, each of which became in itself a furnace; and enormous was the extent of spoil taken from the wells and fountains and caverns where it had been placed for concealment. And then this wild and daring man retired into private life. We are not astonished at this; we do not marvel that toil-worn and weary, he said at last to Rapine, "It is enough;" but we must own we are surprised to find the degree of knighthood conferred on him in reward for his services, and to see in the island records of Jamaica that Sir Henry Morgan held the place of Lieutenant-Governor there.

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We must, however, bear in mind that the time in which he lived had a pernicious influence upon his character. Cruelty and oppression were unblushingly held up as virtues, and Charles II. was perhaps more adapted to encourage and patronize lawless pirates, than to attend to the welfare of his people. Morgan had plunged himself into a stormy and violent atmosphere. Early in life he had parted from those principles which breathe peace and good will to man; and how in the retirement of his old age he settled with his conscience for the despite he had done to humanity, we must leave with Him who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men.

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XVII.

CRABS.

THE mountain land about Port Royal is very beautiful. On its ascent are scattered bread-fruit, and mango-trees, spreading tamarind groves, and clustering bamboos; and whilst the thirsty low-lands have a sun-burnt appearance, the foliage. under the influence of the cooler atmosphere of the mountains, is fresh and luxuriant. The winding bridle-path often borders some abrupt precipice or inaccessible cliff. The palm-trees give a pleasing variety to the forest scenery, and rich and glowing is the embroidery of colours immediately around you, caused by the intermingling hues of the delicate "south-sea rose," the bright scarlet cordia, the highly-scented jasmine, and the white and clustering blossoms of the iron-wood-tree, which stands like an apparition amidst dark and glossy foliage. If travelling early in the day, the notes of the Solitaire,

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from some unseen nook, fall sweetly on you. It is a bird fond of the dews and the morning, and a mysterious influence is imparted to its melody, from the very circumstance, that if the little creature fancies itself discovered, its song ceases.

There are country residences scattered on the mountains around, where a perpetual spring smiles; and the climate in these regions beyond the reach of fever, is perhaps the most delightful in the world.

Throughout the day, reptiles of many kinds sport about in the shade; and even whilst the sun is high, the croaking lizard will make its appearance, the pleasant air luring it from its dark tree hollow to lie motionless for hours in the softened light; yet it never wanders far from its home, and will return to it on the slightest alarm with incredible velocity. Some of these creatures are very playful. In their merry gambols they will flirt their bright purple tails from side to side, and swell out their throats, which in succession become tinted with every colour of the rainbow. Sometimes they lose at once all these beautiful hues, and exhibit a dusky soot colour, looking for the time as if they never could be associated with beauty. We succeeded in taming one of them. It appeared on our table

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at the same time every morning, and in return for our gift of crumbs, gave us its brightest gold, which irradiated its throat after these morning meals.

If a negro falls asleep under the trees, the Green Lizard, it is said, will watch over him, and endeavour to awake him, should a snake be seen approaching; but it is most probable, that when they thus venture on the human body, it is simply in their chase for flies. Music possesses a peculiar charm for these little animals. We have known them fascinated by the sound of a flute, and forgetting all their timidity, leap boldly on the piano before us.

Crabs are very plentiful in the West India Islands. The Land-crab burrows in a sandy soil near the sea, generally coming out at night to feed on the grassy banks. During the rainy season, however, it is to be seen in numbers during the early part of the evening, and then the negroes sally forth with their bags, and bring home the little creatures captive for supper. The mountain-crab is about two inches long, of a dusky red. It is very interesting to watch them in their annual march from the mountains. They pour out in hundreds from holes of the earth and clefts of the rock, and commence their journey to

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the sea. There is wonderful regularity maintained in their procession, and their chief object seems to be to pursue a straight course, turning as little as possible to the right or to the left. If they meet with a house they will, if uninterrupted, scale its walls; and if rivers cross their way, they seem with reluctant necessity to wind along the course of the stream. This large company is separated into battalions, and the foremost division consists of the boldest and the strongest crabs. It is true, that if surprised, they retreat in confusion, but they are soon again in marching order; and when they arrive at the sea-shore, they plunge into the water, and let the sea, as it passes gently over them, wash off the spawn. The eggs are soon hatched in the sand, and it is astonishing in how short a time the infant crab commences its mountain journey. In preparation for moulting, which generally takes place in the month of August, each crab retires like a solitary hermit to its hole, and there remains till it is equipped in its new shell. Sometimes they are dug up whilst in the midst of this changing process, and their flesh is then considered to be in its richest state. At such times they are covered with a soft skin, which has not hardened into shell.

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The Soldier-crab, which derives its name from its continual change of quarters, possesses at first a very small shell. As it grows too large for this, it searches for an empty shell of larger dimensions, in which it takes up its abode. It is caught on the rocks, as well as on the sea-shore, but it is not held in as much repute as the land-crab.

The Black-crab is esteemed a great delicacy, and being somewhat difficult to obtain, is seen most frequently at the epicure's table.

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XVIII.

GINGER AND ARROW-ROOT.

GINGER is cultivated in Jamaica to a very considerable extent. We are all acquainted with this preserve, but perhaps few of us have seen its green reed-like stalk, crowned by a delicate blue and white flower. It is a native of Asia; but at so early a period did it become naturalised in America, that some have thought it indigenous to that part of the world. It often rises to the height of three feet, but its usual growth seldom exceeds sixteen or eighteen inches. There are two modes of preserving ginger: if the roots are put in boiling water they become very dark-looking; but if they are dried without being scalded, then the white ginger is produced. The soundest and best roots are chosen for this light-coloured ginger; so that it always obtains the highest

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price in the market. The plants are generally dug up in January, and though it is a simple process, it is a busy time with the negroes. Large pans are kept on the ground well filled with water, into which the roots are thrown as soon as they are taken from the earth. When sufficiently cleansed they are divided into small parcels, and these are carried to the boiling, by groups of merry children who look forward to the ginger-gathering as a season of happy festivity. After several boilings the roots are taken out and spread in the sun from day to day until they are thoroughly dried, then they are put into bags and considered ready for the market. But when the root is to be preserved in syrup, it must be dug whilst its texture is yet tender and full of sap. Several syrups are poured on these young roots, each exceeding the other in strength, but the liquid thus removed is not wasted; it is suffered to ferment, and then becomes a pleasant liquor called "cool drink" and is something in its nature like ginger-beer. Ginger is perhaps one of the finest preserves in the world.

Another well-known West Indian production is the Arrow-root plant. It grows plentifully in many parts of Jamaica. In appearance it is very much like the common English "Wake Robin,"

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—the Arum Maculatum of our woods and shady banks. It rises to the height of about three feet, and has broad thick leaves which are crowned by a pearly coronet of small white flowers. We have all been accustomed from infancy to prepared arrow-root: we have seen it given as delicate nourishment to the invalid, and used as light sustenance for the aged; but it was quite a novel thing to us to watch the preparation of this far-famed plant. A great many persons were employed out of doors washing these roots in clear water; they were then beaten to a pulp in wooden mortars: and very loquacious the negro women were whilst thus employed in calculating the chance of success for their sales in Kingston, all the while picking out with great care the fibrous parts of the root. After this, they strained the milky liquor which remained through a hair sieve, washing again the paste-like mass which was left behind. We were told that it would all be spread out the next morning on clear cloths to dry in the sun, and that this process would be continued for two or three days, after which the arrow-root would be fit for consumption. In their simplicity they had no notion of adulterating the powder: in fact so bountifully has nature strewn their acres with this broad-leafed plant, that there is no

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temptation to deceive. To have produced any ingredient to mix with it, would have been superfluous labour; and most assuredly, in this case, implicit honesty was the very best policy in the world.

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XIX.

SUPERSTITIONS.

THE great superstition amongst the negroes in the West Indies is that of Obeahism. The witch of Endor is called in the Hebrew language Obi; the word therefore has reached Africa through the Arabic of the Mohammedans. In Hayti, the term Obeah is not known. The charms are spoken of as Arranga, and the enchanter as Macandai. Amongst the Egyptians, a serpent is called Obion; and Moses in the name God, forbad the Israelites ever to enquire of the demon Obi, translated in the Bible, Wizard.

At first sight this Obeahism appears but a harmless delusion; and it is only when we look closely into it, that the dark mischief it works becomes apparent. The Obeah Chief is on all occasions looked up to as an oracle. He is considered potent to heal diseases; to discover crime, and for the bribe of gold, he will through risk and

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danger find means to satisfy the applicant's wildest thirst for revenge. The more terrible the appearance of the Obeah man is, the more power can he exert over his victims. If his face be deeply furrowed with the harshest lines of age; if his beard be matted and grizzled; his gait loitering, and his figure deformed; so much the better for his purpose. Knowing well the peculiar nature of the people on whom he seeks to impose; he effects a husky and croaking voice, and thus more effectually imposes on the negro. The shrivelled old man is viewed as the unerring prophet; and the implicit belief in his pretended communion with demons is apparent in the horror-stricken countenances of those around him. And this pandering with the deepest emotions of the human heart, was by no means an unprofitable employment. Obeahism assumed a power over health and illness, life and death. The shadows of night gave a mysterious influence to the midnight incantation; and the self-deceived enquirer at this evil shrine was soon led to imagine, that a supernatural power was at work on his enemy.

A fair young girl from England became perhaps unsuspectingly the bride of some creole planter. She thought that her husband had been free

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to seek her affections; and little dreamed she had, by her marriage, displaced from the situation of housekeeper one of Africa's dusky daughters; who with a burning jealousy at her heart, was plotting with the Obeah man a scheme for her rival's destruction. So baneful was the nature of this Obeah practice, that the negro woman, who would have stood aghast at the very thought of murder, fancied herself quite justified in "turning the eyes," as the expression is, of her young mistress; and to accomplish this would not hesitate to set Obi for her, or in other words to receive from the Obeah man a slow poison which she dexterously inserted in the food of her unsuspecting victim, a mission which she is generally most careful to fulfil, having received from the old man the prophetic assurance, that by thus acting, she will regain the lost affections of her master. The bodily disease, the natural consequence of poison, is immediately attributed by the infatuated slave to the power of the Obeah chief; and if the agent of this sin-stained man feel any latent compunction, any sharp pang of conscience, when she looks on the success of her scheme in the drooping form and sunken cheeks of her mistress, on the very system of papal indulgences, for a little

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more money given to the Obeah man, she is assured that all is right, and she watches calmly her helpless rival sink into the grave.

With the advance of civilization attendant on freedom, this obeahism has almost passed away from the British West Indies. The present race of English negroes, though still listless and idle, and almost entirely devoid of enterprise, are comparatively an enlightened set, as the ignorance which was justly considered an indispensable requisite for slavery is unnecessary for free labour; the blacks are no longer shut out from the means of improvement; schools are established throughout the West Indies, and the rising generation in many instances, excels in knowledge the village poor of England.

We are now speaking of obeahism, as it was more than fifty years ago. With the grand-daughter of a lady who lost her life from the practice of Obeah, we were intimately acquainted. This lady noticed a mysterious community of interest amongst some of the negroes on the estate. In the hut of one of the slaves was found a collection of feathers, bottles, rags, alligator's teeth, fish bones, and egg shells; and whilst her h[illegible]nd passed them by with a laugh, as symbols o[illegible] harmless superstition, she felt

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convinced that some deep and terrible mischief lay hidden under these fantastic emblems. As if consumption had marked her for its own, the lady passed away from life, withering as a summer flower sometimes does, with sunshine gleaming around it; and many long years afterwards when she was but imperfectly recollected as a dream of the morning, a dying negro woman revealed the terrible fact to her startled master, that she had long, long ago poisoned his fair English bride. Knowing her mistress' practice of taking every morning a fresh egg for breakfast, she had contrived to insinuate poison through the shell, and thus to work out the Obeah which had been put on her mistress. The woman died a few hours after this confession.

When a negro is put under Obeah; strange as it may seem, poison is not necessary to deprive him of life. The effect of this superstition on his mind is most astonishing. If a garden or poultry yard has been robbed, the proprietor, himself a negro, applies to the man of witchcraft, to set Obi for the thief. It is talked of among the neighbours, and as soon as the culprit discovers that he is under Obi, his imagination conjures up a thousand horrors, which playing riot in his heart, work a real ruin on the physical part of his nature. A

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settled despondency overshadows him, and the terror in his soul saps the very springs of life. The negro is peculiarly susceptible and credulous, and the anticipation of indefinite evil hurries the emaciated victim to his grave.

If a negro is taken ill, he enquires of the Obeah man, whether the sickness be unto death. Should this dire prophet give a chance of recovery, all is well. But if on the contrary when the infatuated inquirer has laid open the anxieties of his soul, he receive an indefinite or doubtful answer, terror and fear become the able ministers of disease, and the poor man finds himself in a very short time standing on the very confines of life.

Many years ago, the proprietor of a fine low-land estate in Jamaica observed that there was a great mortality amongst his negroes. There was no fever prevalent; neither was there any epidemic at that time in the island. Sometimes two or three persons were buried in one day, and the doctor began to suspect, that Obeah was practised on the place. At length in the extremity of her fear, a young woman told her master that all the negroes who had died, had previously been put under Obi, and this led to further investigation. The house of the accused was searched; a variety of articles belonging to the practice of the

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superstition were found in her house, and her master feeling persuaded that she was an Obeah enchantress, sent her off to one of the other West India islands. This punishment had the desired effect. She never again followed those evil courses, and the negroes on the estate from which she was banished were soon restored to their usual health and tranquillity.

Myalism is said to be the disenchanter of Obeahism. Their impositions are very nearly related to each other. The Myalmen by means of a narcotic potion made from a species of calalue, pretend to be able to reanimate dead bodies, and assert, that they can at any time keep the stern messenger death from themselves.

Although these superstitions are, with the dark ignorance fostered by slavery, passing gradually away in the West Indies, some three or four years ago, Dr. T—— travelled through Jamaica successfully practising Myalism, and actually pressing out of the credulity of the negro not less than fifteen or twenty pounds a day.

There was an estate in the country, on which, after a season of drought, the river which was a large one became dry. Under the influence of some inconceivable infatuation, the proprietor, an educated Englishman, drove Dr. T—— in his

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own carriage to the river side. There was a well near its banks into which the doctor was let down; when he appeared again, he brought an alabaster doll from his bosom, and told the negroes who crowded round him, for he had not quite hardihood enough to look at the proprietor, that he had brought up in his arms the mermaid who kept the waters from flowing. He received a handsome fee for thus capturing the spirit of the drought, and though some time passed away before the stream again bore its burden of waters to the ocean; yet when the drought ceased it was attributed with solemn gravity to the influence of Dr. T—— over the mermaid, and He who sends the early and the latter rain was unthought of. At length the doctor was sentenced to imprisonment for raising money under false pretences, and though he contrived to impress his fellow convicts with an idea of his control over the last enemy, they were soon made sensible of the folly of their credulity by the circumstance of his sudden death from a large stone which fell on him.

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XX.

PLATO.

During the last century there was another man who rose to some celebrity as an Obeah chief. A runaway slave named Plato, established himself in the heart of the Jamaica mountains, and soon had a lawless and wild banditti at his command. Robbery and murder lengthened the catalogue of their crimes. But Plato's detection was no easy matter; for any negro who ventured to hint at the place of his retreat, gave way from that very moment to a melancholy foreboding of evil, he became tortured with dreams, and in every shadow on his way fancied he discovered the dark presence of the evil one; he never doubted that this Obeah chief, learning by intuition the revelation he had made, set Obi for him. Plato threatened that whoever put a hand on him should not only suffer physically, but should endure spiritual torments, and that these

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would be the fearful precursors of insanity. He was a handsome athletic man, and collected at his home many of the young negro women who were discontented with their masters. The furniture of this mud-walled house is said to have been uncommonly good; and to supply his many wives with sumptuous apparel, he robbed the Creole ladies of their finery, as they were on their way to the sessions in Spanish Town; and if the waiting-maid were in any way attractive, he ran off with her as well as with the band-box.

Unfortunately for Plato, he persuaded himself that he could not live without drinking ardent spirits; and this was not the caprice of the moment, rum had become almost necessary to his existence. At one time, having established himself in the neighbourhood of Montego Bay, he started at twilight into the town to purchase his favourite potion. He was recognised by a negro, who immediately gave the alarm that Plato was in sight. Echo wafted the dreaded name from tree to tree, but alas, no one was within hearing. The angry Obeahman rushed on the frightened slave, and raising the axe with which he was armed, aimed a heavy blow at his enemy, who escaped it by flying precipitately before his pursuer. Plato however, was very swift of foot, and

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gained every moment on the negro, who suddenly ascended into a bread-fruit tree which presented itself at the road side. Plato could not follow, for he was no climber, but he began to hew down the tree with his axe, and would soon have succeeded in so doing if his enemy had not contrived to pelt him on the head with pieces of the tree, which he brake from the boughs around him. This so delayed Plato in his work, that the shrieks of the slave were heard before it was completed, and the Obeah man was obliged in his turn to seek safety by flight.

Having one day purchased some spirits, he could not resist putting the tempting draught to his lips on his way home; and to drink with moderation, being at all times a difficulty with Plato, he quaffed the whole of the dangerous potion, and very soon lay senseless at the road side. In this condition he was easily made prisoner, and shortly after he was tried at the quarterly sessions at Montego Bay. He was convicted of more than one murder and speedily condemned to die. Plato heard his sentence with extraordinary calmness, and with an odd wild smile, which indifference the negroes attributed to the power of Obeahism. He told the magistrates, and it is affirmed that his skin grew super-

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naturally black as he spoke, that God would avenge his death by a terrible storm, which that very year should shake the island to its foundations, and cause the waters that surrounded it to rush in as a destroying flood upon the land; and those who know anything of the records of the West Indies will be aware, that in that very year, 1780, a fearful hurricane devastated Jamaica, and that the sea passing its usual boundaries, rolled in and deluged the land.

There were trembling hearts in that Court of Justice, and Plato told his executioner that he had set Obi for him, and that he being the minister of his public ignominy should meet his retribution by death before the expiration of the year. The unfortunate young man became careworn and emaciated, and medical skill could do nothing for the fear which was gnawing at his heart. He was sent to America in the hope that change of air might revive him: no expense was spared, but all was in vain.

Religion was not much in vogue at that time in the West Indies. It was considered dangerous to instruct a slave in the precepts of Christianity; and no one spoke to the poor man of the Balm in Gilead. Mental suffering undermined his constitution, and in the midst of sympathising friends

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and experienced doctors, without any tangible disease, he pined away, and, before the year was over, died.

These accidental circumstances were looked upon as miraculous by the negroes. Plato's name was mentioned reverently, and in a mysterious whisper. Obeahism was more implicitly believed in than ever; and, for years after Plato's death, the stoutest-hearted negro trembled and turned pale if he had to walk at night in the vicinity of this Obeah chief's old habitation; for it was confidently asserted that his duppy roamed about in the starlight, and had more than once been seen, axe in hand, under the very bread-fruit-tree which had witnessed his discomfiture.

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XXI.

ANANSI STORIES.

Duppies are ghosts, whose appearance augers always some approaching evil. These shadowy personages, according to the belief of the negro, have taken possession of some of the old Spanish houses in Jamaica. A favourite resort of their's, is Salt Ponds near Spanish Town. We were there for some weeks, and could not prevail on a single servant to remain with us. In the time of the Buccanneers, the Banditti Chiefs held their revels there; concealed their stores of gold, indulged in their lawless entertainments, where cruelty and brutality formed a part of enjoyment; imprisoned their innocent captives in the dungeons below, and stained the dark places of the old dwelling with blood. The rats now hold carnivals there; and rushing noisily about on their predatorial excursions, convince the credulous blackies, that

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the ghosts of those who were slaughtered, are restlessly hurrying to and fro in search of revenge. The sad influence of slavery, whilst it extinguished many a noble feeling, could not crush the fanciful part of the negro's nature, and in his belief of omens, tokens, and warnings, he perhaps exceeds the poor of our own land.

If an owl flap its wings heavily, evil of a serious nature is approaching. If the wind have a wail in its tone which, strange to say, is not often the case in those tropical regions, it is considered the herald of evil tidings. If bats cross each other diagonally in the crimson stream of sunset, some powerful friend will shortly be at variance with you; and if you set a duppy at defiance, going towards it in the endeavour to prove that the supernatural appearance is caused by some undulation of light, or by the shadow flickering on the curtain-fold; illness of a dangerous or, perhaps, fatal nature, is likely to be the sure consequence.

Two large white screech-owls had built their nests in some guinep-trees, not far from this haunted place, and although these birds of evil omen generally contrived to remain invisible during the day, they became very apparent in the silvery moonlight. It seemed, truly, they were lords of the woods at that time; their piercing

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shrieks were melancholy and startling, and the flapping of their wings, unusually loud and distinct, was heard in the stillness of the night.

"In the hollow tree, or the old grey tower,
The spectral owl doth dwell;
Dull, hated, despised in the sunshine hour,
But at dusk he's abroad and well!
Not a bird of the forest e'er mates with him;
All mock him outright by day:
But at night, when the woods grow still and dim,
The boldest will shrink away!

Mourn not for the owl, nor his gloomy plight,
The owl hath its share of good;
If a prisoner he is in the broad day light,
He is lord of the dark green wood.
Nor lonely the bird, nor his ghastly mate,
They are each unto each a pride;
Thrice fonder, perhaps, since a strange dark fate
Hath rent them from all beside."

Amongst insects, the Anansi spider holds a prominent place as the spirit of evil. We heard an African slave drawl out the following Anansi tale in a melancholy tone, making it strangely impressive by suddenly lowering her voice to a whisper, and then all at once swelling out into wild earnestness. She sat on the ground as she related it, giving a kind of emphasis to the metre with her foot, regularly striking the earth with it at every pause.

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"Oh, mother, sweet mother, my pickney child,
That a living star on my path has smiled,
Lies scorched in the fever's burning embrace,
With pain's dark touch on her soft sweet face;
My spirit is troubled, the life-blood chill
Sends shivering through me the sense of ill.

The dark Anansi,
Oh, it came to me
At the crimson fall of day;
With a stealthy creep,
As my babe did sleep,
On her guileless breast it lay!

Go thou forth, my daughter, go forth when night
Wears its crystal dew gems all fresh and bright,
When the all-spice tree, with its shining bark,
Sends silvery light through the foliage dark;
When the fire-fly flits o'er the wavy cane,
And when insects burr on the dusky plain;
Then go forth, my flower, and it may be
Thou shalt learn thy doom from the Anansi.

The young Quadroon wrapped the crocus plaid
Round the babe which soft on her breast was laid,
When the evening breeze in a love-lorn sigh
Woo'd the graceful palm trees in passing by;
She wound her way through the deep arcade
By the gleaming myrtles and citrons made,
With a failing step, and with trembling frame,
To the crystal banks of the stream she came!

Anansi, Anansi,
Alone, alone with thee,
And night, and dews undefiled,
Shall the kindled torch
Of this fever scorch
To the death my hapless child!"

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In the reedy grass
Where the shadows pass,
Silently over the ground,
In the silvery coil
Of its spidery toil
Lay the dark Anansi bound!

And a whispering sound, such as elfish sprite,
Breathes of coming doom to the silent night,
Passed her, whizzing low with a rustling sigh,
She knew the Anansi in truth was nigh.
Speak, oh speak, she cried, I am strong to bear,
And break the chain of this grim despair!
Three times the sun
His course shall run,
Three times the weeping flowers
Shall bow to the rain
And awake again
All gemmed by pearly showers.

Then shall fall on thy way the Anansi's curse,
Foaming waters shall be the plumèd hearse,
And rocking billows thy babe shall nurse;
And Death shall smile,
To see how, when fever had failed to bring
Thy babe to the shade of his dusky wing,
The poor little helpless unconscious thing
Was his the while.

Woe is me! woe is me!
Anansi, Anansi,
And the mother tore her hair;
I'm off and away,
Ere the third sad day,
From the vile Anansi's lair.

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The wind moaned out at that fatal word,
The mountain torrents to wrath were stirred,
And ere one cloud dimmed the heaven fair
Mysterious darkness enwrapped the air.
On went the mother with rapid step,
Nor paused till under the dark guinep;
She laid herself down in a ravine deep,
With her babe in the soft embrace of sleep!

Anansi, Anansi,
It crawled on stealthily,
To the folds of the infant's dress;
In frightful dreams
The mother screams,
Then wakes to consciousness.

She gazes round, and it seems to be,
That the land is changed to the foaming sea,
A broad and mud-stained watery sheet
Spreads widely out at her trembling feet.
Woe is me! the gully is down, she cried,
As she stood knee-deep in the troubled tide;
And the hoary trunk of a cedar tree
Came dashing on with that new-born sea!

The infant is torn from her grappling hold,
She springs in the waters, by fear made bold.
Oh, save, she cried; but her call was vain:
Her infant was borne to the greedy main.
No succour from man could be given there,
And heaven was veiled by her dark despair!

On the craggy side of that muddy dell
All bruised and senseless the mother fell;

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The passers-by saw her bleeding there
With the crimson stain on her matted hair;
She breathed, she lived—but her baby's doom
Made the glad earth seem as a living tomb.

Her eyes grew wild,
She screams, 'My child!'
And stares on the uptorn tree;
For she sees a spot,
On its leaves a blot;
'Tis the terrible Anansi!"

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XXII.

THE BAHAMA ISLES.

ALTHOUGH these islands are in possession of the English, it must be owned that British colonists have had but little to do with them—if we except a few Royalists who, at the conclusion of the American war, found a precarious and temporary home there. The rocky and dangerous nature of the shoals surrounding them, cause, no doubt, the outward-bound vessel to fear any approach to their shores. They rise perpendicularly from the deep water; and the sand on their coasts is covered with shells. Very near to them, low rocks encircle portions of the ocean; and whilst without these barriers the sea is unfathomable, within, the bottom is either of a beautiful white sand, or covered with a rich carpet of sea-weed. Beyond these ramparts are narrow lines of land called quays, rising a little above the surf and spray;

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and though they have but a few weeds on their barren surface, they abound with turtle, which always choose the most unfrequented places for laying their eggs.

Many vessels from Cuba, Jamaica, and the other islands, regardless of the dangerous navigation, visit these reefs on what they call "turtling expeditions," at certain seasons of the year.

These Islands are about five hundred in number. One cluster of them is called by the French, "Les Iles Turques," from the circumstance of their being, on their first discovery, covered by a species of Cactus very much resembling a Turkish cap.

There are numerous salt ponds scattered throughout these islands. In all probability the sea has frequently beaten over them, for their whole surface is chafed and fretted, broken alternately into long shallows and deep excavations, —and these are filled with sea-water.

During the warm season the salt crystallizes and forms many sparkling lakes, giving to these desolate islands that severe and peculiar kind of beauty which characterizes the ice-bound-regions of the north. The largest of these ponds is called the Grand Turk, and is more than a mile in length.

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On the very borders of these vast marshes, a delicate kind of Guinea-grass takes every opportunity of bursting into luxuriant life.

From the variety of banks, and the numerous shallows around these islands, the chance of shipwreck in their neighbourhood is perhaps greater than in any other part of the ocean.

These coasts, some years ago, were infested with a desperate sort of people called "wreckers," who, though ostensibly gaining a livelihood by fishing, derived no inconsiderable profit from the desperate game of piracy.

Many trading-vessels from the larger West India Islands have been destroyed on those inhospitable coasts; and the wreckers, or conchs as they are familiarly called, are more intent on aggrandizing themselves from the spoil thus placed at their disposal than on saving the lives of the unfortunate passengers.

Some Cocoa-nut-trees were planted on one of these quays, by way of warning to mariners; but it would not have suited the dark purposes of these wreckers to allow such a beacon to stand, and scarcely had they begun to grow, ere they were uprooted.

A race of men more capable of battling with

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the dangers and vicissitudes of a sea-faring life certainly never existed. We may form some idea of their character from a conversation which Mr. Mackinnon had with one of their most skilful captains.

He enquired what success they had lately met with; for these Wreckers are licensed by the Governor of the Bahamas to cruise amongst the islands for the benefit of certain salvage which they receive on all the property they rescue from the waves.

The reply was, that there had been forty sail of wreckers lying along the Florida coast for some months.

Mr. Mackinnon then observed that they must have had opportunities of rendering great service to those shipwrecked in that dangerous gulf.

The Wrecker said, "No, they generally went on in the night."

"But could you not raise beacons on shore, or use your own lights?" enquired Mr. Mackinnon.

"No, no," replied the conch, laughing, "we always put them out for a better chance."

"But it would be more humane to keep them there," observed the traveller.

"I do not go there for humanity; I go racking," was the honest but unfeeling reply.

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And these wreckers and fishermen, from their wild and lawless lives, not only become most cruelly daring, but they endure hardships inconceivable, and reconcile themselves to circumstances which to any other class of persons would be most appalling.

Mr. Mackinnon relates an anecdote of a fisherman who was casting his nets at a little distance from the shore. As evening approached, he was surprised by a sudden gust of wind coming off the land. His boat, notwithstanding all his exertions, was soon driven from its moorings, and drifting before the wind till it was out of sight of land, was exposed to the swell of an increasing sea, which every moment threatened to overwhelm it. Tossed about by the foaming waves till night was far advanced, he suddenly heard the sound of breakers at a distance. This, which at any other time would have caused him the greatest fear in so desperate a crisis, afforded him a ray of hope. Scarcely had he begun to distinguish the foam which broke whitely on the darkness of the night, when he found himself thrown on the eastern edge of the great Bahama bank. At a small distance from these rocks lay a quay called Ragged Island, and floating almost senseless on the waters, he was flung on that desolate place.

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Though preserved from the waves, he was in danger of perishing from hunger, as a few fruitless shrubs alone surrounded him. He was, however, accustomed to dive for small fish, and in the waters around him he soon discovered a sufficient quantity for his subsistence, and for nearly six weeks they were meat and drink to him. Although bereft of all the comforts and necessaries of life, and exposed to hardships few could have endured, though the rocks were his pillow, and the imperfect canopy of a few stricken shrubs his only shelter, he had become so reconciled to his desert home, that when taken off the island he declared if his wife had been with him he could have remained happily there for the rest of his days.

A little to the north of the Turks are the Caicos, a cluster of islands lying on the waters in the form of a crescent. In the largest of these are one or two sugar-plantations. Cattle browse on the scanty pastures, and oranges and wild lemons grow on the broken land, a little removed from the neighbourhood of the sea.

These islands are thinly inhabited, and some interesting traces of the Aborigines have been found there. The traveller is shewn utensils formed of clay, and some stone hatchets, on which

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the dolphin's head is curiously embossed, emblematic of the Indian's association of thought with the seas around him.

In a large cave several skulls were found, which on being touched crumbled to dust; and throughout one of these islands may be traced the remnants of an Indian road.

Memorials slight as these, are all that remains to tell us of a people, who were once the peaceful possessors of these Tropic Isles, with cares and fears, and hopes, and anxieties such as ours. All have passed away under the strong arm of the oppressor; no children were left us to tell the tale of their fathers; their love and their hatred, their joy and their sorrow perished with them; neither is there anything remembered of all that they did under the sun.

The Heneagens are dangerous rocks; but contain springs of fresh water, and several large salt ponds. They have few inhabitants; the difficulty of approaching the coast being very great. Further north are the Hogsties, named more poetically by the French Les Etoiles; a favourite resort of the wreckers; and a little beyond these in a more northerly direction are the French Keys, dangerous Islets, and Maya Guana, an almost uninhabited spot; deriving its name from the number

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of Guanas which hide themselves in its cliffy hollows. These animals, which are of the Lizard kind, have rather a repulsive appearance. They are generally of a brownish green hue, and are shining and slimy. Once a year they leave their strong holds, to deposit their eggs in the sands of the sea shore.

Their flesh constitutes a very great part of the support of the wreckers; and in many of those islands, dogs are trained for the purpose of catching them, as the Guana is considered by the negro no trifling delicacy. Like Lizards, they are powerfully affected by music. When basking in the sun, they have been known to be so fascinated by a negro's whistle, as to allow themselves to be quietly taken captive.

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XXIII.

CASTLE ISLAND—CROOKED ISLAND, ETC.

CASTLE island rises like a hoary tower, from the waters which are of a vivid green, and beautifully transparent. It is separated from Crooked Island only by a narrow channel; and the Palmettoes lining the curve of the Bay, have a pleasing and very cheerful effect in the midst of those rocky seas. After crossing the broad sandy beach, you meet with several large salt ponds; but the country beyond has no claim to the character of sterility. The lemon vine trails its delicate tendrils along the road-side, and clusters of a peculiar kind of tropical apple-tree, with a light and delicate foliage are frequently met with.

The curious red Mangrove, or sea-side grape fringes the ponds. Their roots rise far above the earth, and from their uppermost boughs, tough ropy shoots descend into the water. There is a dreariness, and a solitude in this island, which in

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spite of all that nature does to give softness and beauty, to the scenery becomes almost oppressive.

Passing over a broken surface of rock, you reach the interior of the country; and field after field is covered with wild and luxuriant foliage. The Sage Tree and the Tobacco plant grow there; and the Coffee Tree stands up amongst them, its snowy blossoms gemming like pearls the dark foliage, whilst the smallest and most delicate species of the Humming bird sips nectar from these dewy flowers. Beautiful is the appearance of these tiny creatures, as with their bright ruby throats and golden wings, they hang suspended over the flower-chalices, or flit with inconceivable swiftness from bud to bud. Like bees, they always extract their food on the wing; and their name is derived from the humming noise they make whilst thus engaged. The colours of their plumage are indescribably brilliant, and their elegant circular nests are fit abodes for such fairy inhabitants. Yet are these little creatures most pugnacious, and sometimes when they dispute the possession of the same flower, the contest assumes a most serious nature. They fly against each other, their long bills serving as bayonets, and very often these battles end only with the life of one of the combatants. If this little humming bird meets

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with a flower which has been previously robbed of its honey, it is amusing to watch how in the excess of its disappointment, it will break the blossom from the stem, and endeavour to tear it to pieces.

An attempt has been made to cultivate Cotton in this island, but the crops have from time to time failed. Indeed, luxuriantly as the wild plants grow, the soil seems waywardly to resist every effort at cultivation. All exotics speedily droop and die; and only the hardiest forest-trees, and the rock-loving Palmetto take kindly to the soil.

A narrow road runs through the northern part of Crooked Island to Acklin's Straits, and a chain of gentle hills extends from north to south, on whose slopes are situated the few scattered houses of the inhabitants, while graceful avenues of cocoa-nut-trees form shadowy pathways to the road below.

Large natural caves in the rocks are among the chief curiosities of the place. Sometimes they have the rough and broken appearance of a ruined castle.

Not very far from the sea is a huge cliff which has evidently at some former time been within reach of the billows, for it is curiously embossed and worn into the form of a grotto; whilst at a

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little distance the rock-work, fretted by the continued chafing of the waters assumes the appearance of sculptured pillars.

The most wonderful of these caves is reached through a deep chasm which hangs over it, and from the action of the sea, the roof has all the appearance of a fine gothic ceiling. The stalactites depending from the roof being mouldy, have assumed a bluish green colour, which greatly adds to the beauty of their appearance. The cave Swallows, as you enter, whirl around your head, coming forth in great numbers from their ingeniously built nests, which are generally found in the hollows of the cliff. They are made of mud, but luxuriously lined with the soft down of the silk cotton.

The wild fig-tree has contrived to penetrate with its flexible branches through small rocky fissures in the roof, and stand like columns on each side of this wonderful arcade. The light breaks imperfectly through the openings which admit their boughs, and falls tremblingly and mysteriously on the obscurity which it does not entirely disperse.

Over the whole island, the action of the sea may be traced.

The woods are certainly in their infancy, and

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have more the appearance of an extensive shrubbery, than of forest-land.

Some of the Indian dogs are still found there, of the very same kind as those which Columbus observed the natives of Cuba taking about in their bosoms. This little animal is called the Alco, and does not bark; it is generally white, with an occasional black spot on its body. It has a large head, pendulous ears, a fringed tail, and its hair is peculiarly soft and silky. It is so harmless and quiet in its nature, that it is no marvel it became the household pet of a simple people. The Indians used it in their chase of the Agouti, which is a curious little creature, something between the rabbit and the fox. It was once common to all the West Indian islands, but its race is greatly diminished, although it is still found in Porto Rico, Cuba, Hispaniola, and Jamaica.

The weather in Crooked Island is generally calm and lovely. Flocks of wild parrots, rather smaller than our domesticated bird of that kind, skim through the air, in the neighbourhood of the All-spice-tree, on whose berries they feed. It stands with its white blossoms like an apparition of beauty, amidst the darker foliage; and the slightest breeze awakes its fragrance. If the

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leaves are bruised, they emit a powerful scent, almost as strong as that of the spice itself. And this beautiful tree requires no rich or cultivated soil to attain perfection,—like some minds which notwithstanding unfavorable circumstances make wonderful progress.

The Prickly Pear grows luxuriantly on the barren ledges of rocks which the hardiest wild flowers have deserted, taking from the otherwise rugged spot the very character of desolation, and typifying, that in the natural as well as in the moral world, there is no situation so dark, but that it sometimes is cheered by its Creator's smile. Butterflies of every form and hue hover round its finely barbed spines, fascinated by its growing leaves as the moth is by the candle. Spiders' webs of the finest possible texture hang vertically over the joints of this armed plant, and from the delicacy of their construction seem almost out of place there.

There is a great quantity of torchwood in some parts of this island, which from its bituminous qualities supplies the place of a taper to the negroes.

The Butter-plant is considered good food for cattle; it is an indigenous shrub, and derives its name from the very glossy appearance of its leaves.

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Several medicinal herbs grow wild at the road side.

The Palma Christi or Castor-oil-tree rises to the height of fifteen or twenty feet. Its large leaves grow singly from long narrow tube-like stems. In many of the West Indian Islands this plant is extensively cultivated, and it flourishes best at the river side. The nut is gathered when it begins to turn brown. The seeds are then taken from the husk and bruised in a mortar; after this, they are carefully inclosed in a linen bag and boiled in a very large quantity of water till their oil rises to the surface; this is carefully skimmed off and then strained. The cold-drawn castor oil so generally used in England, is extracted from the bruised seed by means of a hand press. On the large sugar estates in the West Indies, this oil is used in the boiling houses for lamps. It gives a clear and excellent light, and can be provided with very trifling expense.

The Lignum vitæ, whose name signifies the wood of life, kept by some invisible aid brightly green, laughs at seasons of drought, and stands covered with its beautiful blue blossoms when all around is withering.

The wild Cinnamon with its dark leaves, and delicate flower, somewhat resembling our English Lilac, grows luxuriantly all over the country.

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There are no fresh water streams in the island, so that the first settlers had wells to dig on the hills, and it was fortunate for them that whilst thus engaged, nature supplied them with overflowing chalices of purest water.

The Ananas, or wild pines, which had taken root on the branches of some of the largest trees, not only studded with their ruby-like blossoms the dark recesses of the wood, but in their broad and hollow leaves preserved the rain water for a considerable time.

All along the shore, and following the sandy tracts of soil, grows the small Palmetto, a most useful tree to the negro. Its thick leaves make for his cottage strong thatch which is said to be bullet proof. The palmetto bark is so hard, that it is often used instead of boards for walls of outhouses, fences, &c.

Occasionally we meet with the Prickly Pole, a curious and delicate-looking palm, which was used by the Indians to barb their arrows made from the straight and smooth wild sugar-cane. It is said that the Indians tortured their prisoners of war with the leaves of this palm; that wrapping them round with cotton, steeping them in oil, and then setting them on fire, they thrust them flaming into the sides of their captives. If they

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screamed out, they were taunted as cowards; but if they had strength of nerve to bear their agonies silently, they were regarded after their miserable death with great veneration by their tormentors. To heal the wounds inflicted by this weapon, the Indian Arrow-root was used, and from this circumstance derived its name.

The hardy, small, but beautiful Iron-wood-tree, finds a home in this island. It is continually to be seen with its delicate clusters of white flowers peeping out amidst the oval-shaped leaves.

Crooked Island is also famous for its fine Braziletto-trees, and for the Mastick, the one so noted for the scarlet dye which it produces, and the other for the durability and hardness of its wood, which will resist swivel shot, and is said to last more than a century in the ground.

Sometimes the rugged upland is beautifully relieved by a thick coppice of Mahogany and Tamarind-trees, which, throwing their massive shadows on the rough and broken land, produce a pleasing effect.

On the eastern coast, there is a beautiful bay, which has a back-ground of gentle hills called Mount Pisgah. There is a curious cave in this neighbourhood. The stalactite columns in the imperfect light have the appearance of highly

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polished marble pillars; and the rocky roof, fretted and worn by the water, looks like some fine old gothic arch in ruins; the light sometimes resting on the green cavities, becomes tinted, as when pouring through the stained windows of a dim cathedral.

On these islands, so little known to Europeans, the spirit of beauty has left its traces, and many a wild deep glen seems as if fresh from the Creator's hand when he looked on that which he had made, and behold it was very good.

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XXIV.

ACKLINS—LONG ISLAND.

Acklin's Key is almost united by rugged crags to Crooked Island. In spite of the generally-barren appearance of this place, thousands of flowering shrubs give even to its uncultivated parts a very great share of beauty.

The cotton-trees in early autumn are already white to harvest, and the pods just bursting open, look, on a first glance, as if offering a gift of snows to those tropical sunbeams. The Anguilla cotton is most generally used; as the French shrub, though higher and more graceful in its appearance, produces such small seeds, that it is difficult to separate them from the wool.

Those plants bear the most cotton, which grow in exposed situations. They are planted in rows at a little distance from each other, that they may have room to throw out their branches.

The Cotton shrub rises to the height of ten or

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twelve feet, and has a delicate appearance. In about five months from the time of its being planted, it puts out its yellow blossoms; and in six or eight weeks after, the pod is formed. The cotton is separated from the seeds by a machine called a "gin," which is made of two smooth rollers, placed parallel to each other, in a frame. Each of these rollers is fastened to a wheel, and these wheels move in opposite directions. The cotton is thrown in whilst the machine is in motion, and soon passes between the wheels, leaving the seeds behind which are too large to escape. After this process it is carefully picked by the hand, and then packed in bags.

Some of the negroes engaged in this work are cheerful and intelligent, and explain to the stranger with a natural grace of manner, that a good deal of care is necessary in planting the cotton tree—that the mould should at first be placed very lightly on the seeds, and the earth kept loose about the young plants till they acquire a considerable degree of strength.

Pigeons of all sorts abound in the woods, and beautiful parrots. But the most remarkable bird there is the Flamingo, which, perhaps, possesses more brilliancy of colour than any other tropical bird whatever. At a distance it appears of a soft

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pink; but, on a nearer view, its neck, and sometimes the whole of its wings, are found to be of a rich scarlet interspersed with an occasional streak of black. The flamingos are timid creatures, and will not suffer you to approach them; sometimes you may see them in large flocks feeding under water on the distant shoals. They are without doubt the "tall red birds" which Columbus mentions having seen in Cuba. So fearful are they of man, that as the cultivation of the islands increases, they disappear, migrating to some rocky shore which bears no trace of human habitation.

It is said, that when the Europeans first visited the West Indies, the flamingoes were in no way distrustful of mankind; but from the moment that one of their band had been shot, they became suspicious, and regarded the human species with terror. Like rooks, they keep one of their number always employed as sentinel; and when he apprehends danger, he gives a loud scream. In an instant the whole flock is on the wing, and though generally very silent birds, at such a time they rend the air with their cries. Their nest is made of mud, based on a sort of hillock. They do not sit on their eggs like other birds, but stand over them, their long legs reaching the ground on each

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side of the hill. The neck of this bird is also of a great length, and when it stands erect, it is more than six feet in height.

It is curious to watch the flamingoes searching for small fish and insects in the shallow water; they throw up the mud most energetically, using their webbed feet as a spade. The ancients greatly prized them, and used them in their sacrifices. Pliny speaks of their tongue as a great delicacy.

Long Island is very like Acklin's Keys, and derives its name from the fact of its being 300 miles long, and in some places not more than three miles in breadth; and nature, as if determined not to leave this barren spot without some share of beauty, has placed rows of the majestic cabbage-tree along its shores. It contains two large salt-ponds; and, at a comparatively early period, vessels from New York traded there for salt.

Shells are abundantly mixed with the soil, and a gentle line of hills traverses the island. The land is considered favourable to the growth of cotton, but the inhabitants do not cultivate it to any great extent.

St. Salvador, remarkable for being the first spot on which Columbus stood in the New World of his discovery, has a ruined chapel, and one or two

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dilapidated buildings speaking of the past, amidst the hurry and bustle of present life.

There are several kinds of fish in the clear water around the coast. The Sea-egg is there, looking very much like a hedge-hog, and covered with a thousand spears. It is of a circular form—its mouth being a small round hole curiously placed in the middle.

The Prickly Toad-fish, the terror of fishermen, is also there; a repulsive-looking creature, with a very large head and a dull brown skin, covered with black spots.

The Hartshorn-coral, so called from its widely-extended branches resembling the horns of a hart, spreads out below the transparent waters. Innumerable fish sport round its unyielding boughs, and—

> "With their fins and shining scales,
> Glide under the green wave in shoals that oft
> Bank the mid-sea: part single, or with mate,
> Graze the sea-weed, their pasture, and through groves;
> Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,
> Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold."

Guanas peep forth from the interstices of the rock, and lizards of all colours and shapes seem, with more than their usual boldness, to throng around. Some are of a silvery-gray, clouded

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with orange, which, at the sides, softens off into white. Others flit about like living gold—for the shiny fluid with which the bodies of these little creatures are covered, has all the effect of a fine polish.

The Red-throated lizard is the most timid of all its species. It remains throughout the day concealed in its rocky hiding-place, but comes forth at twilight in quest of its evening repast. Sometimes throughout the whole night, it will continue its croak, appearing to rest only during daylight.

So perfect is the lizard in its fairy-representation of the crocodile, that amongst the peasantry in some parts of Egypt, it is a generally-received notion, that the eggs which the crocodile deposits in the water, contain real crocodiles, while such as are laid on land, produce only lizards.

The great Bahama Bank is simply an enormous collection of sand, or rather of shells, which have become in a great measure pulverised; though many of them are worn into shining pebbles by the continual action of the water. It is several hundred leagues in circumference, and the sea around it, though peculiarly transparent, is exceedingly deep. On all sides, the heads of rocks are seen rising just above the water, but the navigation can scarcely be called difficult, on account

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of the clearness with which these dangers are seen through the crystal wave.

New Providence is more known than the surrounding islands, simply because its chief town, Nassau, is the principal naval and military station of the Bahamas. The harbour is good, and though open in many parts, is sheltered from the violence of the sea.

The town of Nassau runs prettily up the mountain slope, which is crowned by an old fortress that grimly keeps watch on the summit. It contain some good public buildings, and has a large square.

The cultivation of cotton in this island has completely failed, owing, it is said, to the destruction of the young trees by those baneful insects, the red bug and the chenille.

There are very good roads throughout the country; and though the forest scenery is not on so grand a scale as in the larger islands, there are spots of beauty which, if not grandly wild, have received from nature her whole treasury of flowers.

The most delicate plants of our English hothouse grace the mountain-sides, and stand gemmed in crystals by the morning dew. Beautiful orange-groves with golden fruit and snowy blossoms clustering together on the same bough, have of their

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own accord, formed themselves into a bright grove amidst the more sombre trees around them.

The climate is two or three degrees cooler than that of Crooked Island, and it is, perhaps, on this account that the pitch-pine, a native of the North American forest is sometimes seen there.

A great deal of land remains uncultivated, but the Agricultural Society under the patronage of the legislature of the Bahamas is already lessening this evil.

This island is said to have derived its name from the wonderful preservation from shipwreck of one Captain William Sayle: he felt the Divine care which had interposed to deliver him, and gave the name of Providence to the island.

The Bahama Isles were for some time granted by Charles II. to the Duke of Albemarle and a few other proprietary lords; but they were dissatisfied and turbulent; and the pirates, who looked jealously on anything like civilization in a place they considered their own, continually attacked the island, whose strength was weakened by internal divisions, murdered many of the inhabitants under circumstances of unspeakable cruelty; and it is affirmed that in their lawless brutality they actually roasted one of the governors alive.

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XXV.

BLACK-BEARD, THE PIRATE.

THE name of John Teach is still remembered by the inhabitants of Nassau, and the exploits of this desperate bandit chief form the theme of many a grandmother's evening tale. He was a tall fierce-looking man, and from the unusual length of his dark beard, which in snake-like coils descended to his waist, he was called Black Beard. His portrait, which is in the possession of one of the old inhabitants of New Providence, represents him as a most ferocious brigand, with three brace of pistols slung over his shoulders, and lighted matches placed over his ears. As it was a rule with the pirates to confer the chief authority on those who were the most violent and outrageous, Black Beard's claim to be commander-in-chief could not be overlooked, and he was soon made captain of the most daring set of desperadoes that ever existed.

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At the eastern end of the town, the trunk of a wild fig-tree is still shewn, amongst whose natural arcades this brutal chieftain once held his court. The greater part of his time, however, was passed on board his own vessel, and such was the innate ferocity of his character, that his very mirth was wild and dreadful. Sometimes he exhibited himself before his crew as a demon, and on one occasion formed the mad idea of shewing them a hell of his own creation. Unperceived by his men, he placed a quantity of sulphur and other combustibles between the decks of his vessels; suddenly he kindled a flame, and shutting down the hatches, literally enveloped himself and his men in fire and brimstone. With oaths and frantic gestures he then rushed about amongst them as unaffected, it is said, by the burning atmosphere as if he had really been accustomed to wander on the dark Plutonian shore; and it was with some difficulty that his companions, fainting and half suffocated, could effect their escape. One is inclined to suppose that he lived under the continual influence of intoxication; seeking perhaps, by this means, to still the accusing voice that at times makes itself heard even by the most daring in wickedness.

With regard to the number of his wives, we

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are reminded of the widely-circulated fable of Blue Beard. They were fourteen in number; and though we are not positively told that he murdered any of them, his conduct towards some of these was too brutal to be revealed.

In the early part of the seventeenth century, the English government determined to clear the tropical seas of this ruffianly band, and some ships of war were sent out for this purpose. Black Beard had taken up his position in the shallows of a narrow inlet near Cape Slatterus, in North Carolina; and had it not been for the daring courage and singular intrepedity of a brave young lieutenant, by name Maynard, the outrages of this bandit chief would not have been, in all probability, so soon terminated.

On account of the shallow water, and the intricate navigation of the coast, two hired sloops were manned from the frigate, and put under the command of young Maynard, who sailed to the mouth of the inlet where Black Beard was waiting for his prey. He at once determined to make a resolute defence, and prepared himself for action by drinking a double portion of strong spirits, which increased his natural daring into rashness. The little inlet was so difficult to navigate, that Maynard's sloops grounded in their endeavour to

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make the passage throughout, and Black Beard, from his knowledge of the coast, possessed so much advantage over the enemy, that he maintained, for some time, a running fight. At length his vessel was grounded, and he poured in a destructive fire on Maynard's troops as they advanced to board him. The young lieutenant's loss was great; but he wavered not; his resolution remained stedfast to grapple with and subdue the enemy, or perish in the attempt. He threw the ballast out of his ship, and concealing his men between decks, took the helm in person, and steered directly against Black Beard's vessel. In his desperation he tried to blow up his ship, but Maynard baffled him in this determination; he boarded him with twelve of his men, and overtook the chief as he was hurrying with a match to the powder magazine. A dreadful contest ensued, in which Maynard shot this reckless being, whose very name had so long been a word of terror to the inhabitants of the Bahamas.

After this, New Providence went on very peaceably for some time.

In the year 1731 the Spaniards, assisted by the Americans, took possession of the island; and the singular way in which it was restored to Great Britain deserves to be remembered.

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Colonel Deveaux, of the South Carolina Militia, undertook, with only fifty volunteers, to recover the little spot which stood out so temptingly on the ocean; its beautiful palm-trees fringing the transparent waters. There were seven hundred troops stationed at Nassau, and Colonel Devaux's recruits were new and undisciplined; many of them negroes from Eleuthera, who knew nothing of combat beyond a boyish fight with a neighbour for a plantain. Yet with this little band he landed at the east of Fort Montague, and so took by surprise the whole garrison, that when he reached the ramparts, one solitary sentinel only was awake. Colonel Devaux sprang upon him, made him prisoner, and possessed himself of the fort. He then pompously marched to the top of the ridge of mountains, and taking up his position in front of the governor's house, commanded him to surrender. So successfully did he deceive the Spaniards with regard to the number of his men, that they were ready, nay even anxious to capitulate. He had his boats rowed to and from the shore, apparently landing each time a fresh party of soldiers. The spot where it was supposed they disembarked being concealed from the town by heavy bush-land, it was not easy to discover that the men only lay at the bottom of the boat, and

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thus returning to the ship, had but to stand up again, and then row to the shore, in order to appear like a fresh band of soldiers. It is even asserted that they made figures of straw, and that these clothed in military attire were placed on the heights, whilst a few of them were disguised as Indians, whom the Spaniards greatly feared. One gun was fired, the only field-piece in possession of the Colonel; and thus through the adventurous spirit and adroit manœuvring of a single individual, New Providence was again in possession of the British Crown.

The Spanish troops expressed the greatest mortification when they found how they had been duped into a surrender; and the story of the doll soldiers on the mountain heights is to this day a tale of the past, amongst the inhabitants of that far-off mountain island.

Andros is a rocky islet, remarkable only for its beautiful mahogany trees, and for a very fine species of the pitch-pine.

Eleuthera has become noted for a shrub which possesses great medicinal virtues, called Eleuthera or Croton, the bark of which has been thought by some superior to the far-famed Peruvian Bark.

In the cluster of the Bimini Islands, which lie eastward of the gulf, there is said by the natives

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to be a spring of such an extraordinary nature, that it will by the virtue of its waters restore, in a few moments, youth with its purity and freshness to the time-worn frame, and sin-seared heart!

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XXVI.

ST. VINCENT.

THE mountains of St. Vincent form a strikingly bold back-ground to the town, which runs for some way in a narrow line along the edge of the waters. These mountains are divided by vallies clothed in woods of peculiar verdure, which are watered by streams continually descending to the sea. On the north-west point of the island, the Souffriére rears its dusky head, continually veiled in clouds. Its sides are furrowed with dark lava tracks, which give it a rugged and unsightly appearance. The crater is very deep, and more than three miles in circumference. The pathway to this mountain is necessarily precipitous and very narrow, but the ferns which gracefully lie on the ascent are remarkable for their size and beauty. The water-lemon-vine, too, trails along the path with its delicate and bright green leaves;

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and the golden flowers of the wild cucumber are often to be seen gemming the earth with their stars.

As you approach the summit of the mountain, the trees which have been gradually diminishing in size, disappear altogether; the ground becomes sandy, and the green mountain-land is exchanged for rocks more or less seared and rugged. Yet even these are not altogether void of vegetation, for tufts of the lichen gleam like emeralds on the cliffs.

It is not without difficulty and danger that the mighty caldron is reached. On the surface of the dark slimy water a thick mist rests, as if nature sought to veil the dreary abyss.

In the midst of all this dusky grandeur, as if to temper with a smile the severity of the scene, from the very heart of these boiling waters, a small conical hill rises, elegantly streaked with sulphur, and clothed with flowers, evergreens, and aromatic shrubs of all kinds.

The purple Nightshade blossoms there, and the Spanish Carnation, a flowering shrub of singular beauty. Its large blossoms are of the softest red, mingled with yellow.

In 1812 there was an awful eruption from this mountain. At the dawn of day a light smoke was observed issuing from the fissures of the cone.

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As the morning advanced, a blue flame burst forth, and the rising sun gave to the heavy mass of vapour a fearful beauty of crimson and fiery gold. The atmosphere soon became impregnated with red smoke, a noise as of thunder issued from the mountain, the earth vibrated continually. The negroes ceased from work and looked in dismay at the trembling cone. The inhabitants of the town clustered together, and, as is usual in such cases, forgot all minor differences in their desire to borrow strength of heart from each other. The birds fell to the ground overpowered by the heavy showers of ashes, and the fields being covered by them, the cattle wandered about restlessly in search of food. All around the island, the sea assumed a dull brown hue, the air was charged with sulphur, and as the darkness of night came on, the immense cauldron began to simmer, and then boiling over, sent streams of lava down the mountain side. As the darkness increased, red flames rose from the mountain, and traced a fiery V on the kindling skies. The negroes looked at each other awe-stricken and amazed, and those amongst them who could read, said, that it betokened *vexation*, the *vengeance* of God on their land.

Such was the power of this terrible scene over

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the strongest mind, that many even amongst the educated acquiesced in this suggestion, as they looked with failing hearts on the increasing body of flame, now driven back, now coming forward, and now forcing its fiery pathway down some dark ravine, overthrowing woods and even rocks, in their course to the sea. There was a fearful sound in the rolling of the lava, as of the muffled tramp of the steeds of death. Heavy showers of cinders fell mingled with fiery stones; and the whole island, as if loosened from its foundation, seemed to float like an immense buoy on the waters. Darkness was on the face of the land, save where the lurid mountain-gleams shed an unnatural and fearful brightness; and in the midst of all this, the first of May was born.

The month of flowers was indeed despoiled of her birthright that morning, for scarcely a blossom was left in the vicinity of that burning mountain to do homage to her appearance. The stately and beautiful mountain-aloes which the negroes use as maypoles, were literally buried in ashes, and the whole land was covered with lava-cinders, and masses of volcanic matter.

Towards the evening of May-day, the noise subsided into a dull and sullen sound; the flames decreased; and the next morning the thick red

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clouds gradually dispersed. The sun came forth, not to smile on woods and vallies, but to glare on lead-coloured and hardened lava. Many lives were lost, and property to a great amount destroyed. Yet just as the Swiss peasant will live in the shadows of the snow-girdled mountains without any dread whatever of the impending avalanche, the inhabitants of St. Vincent plant sugar-canes and build houses in the immediate neighbourhood of this grim mountain; and although the fearful eruption of which we have been speaking was witnessed by many of the present generation, it is but dimly remembered as a tale that is told.

The clear dark blue skies arching over St. Vincent's green forest-land, remind one of Italian scenery; but even in the back-ground is the Souffriére to be seen, stern and inexorable, so that we cannot help looking at this island with something of the same kind of feeling with which we regard one who with a smiling face bears a heavy sorrow in his heart.

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XXVII.

DOMINICA.

DOMINICA stands picturesquely between Guadaloupe and Martinique. It is subject to violent rains which are sometimes of long continuance, and do much damage to the country. At such times the rivers overflow, and not only sweep away fields of the sugar-cane, but sometimes whole streets of the town.

Shortly after the English took possession of the island, it was visited by a convulsion of nature which rent the earth asunder in several places, and created a large and singular cavern in a mountain called Demaulins.

The negroes speak of this extraordinary fissure with fear and mystery, and regard every attempt to fathom it as presumptuous and irreverent, asserting, that evil in some shape or other has ever overtaken those who have ventured on such an experiment. If a stone be thrown into it, you

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neither hear it strike the earth nor splash into the sea, so that the imaginative negro tells you it continues for ever falling; and the enormous trees, the intense solitude, and the shadows of evening gathering round the rent in the hill side, all seem to have lured superstition to claim that nook of land for her own.

Most of the mountains of Dominica are of a volcanic nature, and mineral springs are frequently to be met with amongst them, whose waters are considered very beneficial as tonics, and in some places are hot enough to boil an egg.

The ferns on this island are remarkable, not only for their size and beauty, but for their delicate construction. In some parts of the country they assume almost the appearance of a tree, and are fresh and green as the less aspiring, but lovely ferns which spread their soft carpets over our English vallies.

In consequence perhaps, of the moisture of the climate, Fire-flies abound in Dominica. As soon as twilight gives up her short reign at night, they come forth in thousands, spreading themselves over the land, till it seems as if the stars had fallen from heaven. They stud the dark forest with golden gems, and you may trace them in phosphoric winding along the dusky vallies.

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They are about the size of an English beetle, and the luminous quality, which is tinged with green, appears to be just about the eyes, and under the wings. Some, however, are smaller, and possess this brilliancy only in their tails. Several attempts have been made to transport these little creatures to England, but their brilliancy yields to the first breath of cold air, like those spirits so tenderly moulded, that one cold or unkind word takes from them all their elasticity and gladness.

There is another curious beetle in Dominica called the Blacksmith-fly. From its back a horny point rises, which it presses forward with a jerk into a crevice of the same substance at the back of its head, and this action produces a sound very much resembling that made by the striking of iron. From this circumstance it derives its name. Its head is joined to its body by a thin, but very elastic membrane, and if laid on its back, it will spring to an incredible height and regain its position.

The Vegetable-fly is frequently met with in this island, and is a remarkable insect, not from any peculiarity in structure, as it resembles the small cockchafer, but simply from the extraordinary circumstances attending its death. When apparently in full health, it burrows in the ground,

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where it soon dies, and from its body, in a few days, rises a small plant, which is often passed unnoticed by, from the close resemblance it bears to the coffee-tree; but on taking it from the earth, the insect is found at its root as perfect as when living.

There are vast numbers of wild bees in the woods which produce an abundance of wax, and the most delicious honey.

The mountain slopes are covered with groves of orange and lime-trees, and groups of Citrons put forth their snow-white blossoms where their foliage is darkest.

Many Guava-trees are scattered around the town; they are about the size of an alder. Their fragrant white flowers close at night; but at the bidding of the rising sun they awake and breathe on the dewy atmosphere a delightful perfume. From their fruit, which is the size of a common apple, pale yellow outside, and of a delicate pink within, the far-famed guava jelly is made, so solid in its consistency, and yet so beautifully transparent.

Pine-apples are plentiful in all parts of the island, and are sometimes met with even at the road-side. Their appearance at a distance some-

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what resembles that of the penguin. They stand in the midst of thick spiny leaves, and as if not contented with these for their protection, they wear a helmet of the same defensive nature; but this fruit is now so familiarly known in England that it scarcely needs description.

The Cocoa-nut, or chocolate-tree, is found wild in the woods where, perhaps, it was originally planted by the Spaniards. It is a beautiful, but very delicate tree, with large oblong leaves and a light-red flower. The nuts, which are contained in pods, are very numerous. They were used by the Mexicans as money, six of them being considered equivalent in value to our English half-penny. Its greatest height is not more than sixteen feet. It requires a great deal of care in planting. The situation must be sheltered; for whilst young, its roots are easily loosened by the wind,—in which case it soon fades and dies. For this reason the chocolate plants are generally placed under the shadows of the strong and luxuriant Coral bean-tree, which is cultivated for the express purpose of protecting them, and is called by the Spaniards, "Madre di Cacao."

There is something interesting in the idea of this forest guardianship. Thus, in many instances,

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man shelters man; and our Heavenly Guardian is a shield for all his creatures—a Refuge from the storm—a Shadow from the heat.

A shower of rain will, when the plants are very young, completely prostrate them. Should the weather be dry, they must be watered with great care, and very often a sufficient degree of moisture is imparted to them by placing damp grass around their roots. When the seeds are loose and rattle in the pods, it is time to gather them. The kernels are then picked out, and by daily exposure to the sun become in a short time crisp and dry, and then are ready for the market. Numbers of these seeds are ground very fine, and made into the chocolate-paste—now so much in use—a supply of which is considered in the West India islands a necessary part of household provision.

Roseau, the capital, is an irregularly built town, but it is pleasantly situated, and the streets are wide.

The Government House is in the French style. It is two stories high, and encircled by a wide verandah. It stands in the midst of a garden, and is approached through an avenue of cocoa-nut-trees. Nature does a great deal for this garden, which receives but little assistance from the hand of man—a few labourers being only

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occasionally employed to keep in check the too great prodigality of vegetation.

The church, though small and inconvenient, is a picturesque object; and the gaol, which is built of stone, stands in a healthy situation. The rooms are airy, and the beautiful South-sea rose sheds its soft crimson light on the dusky iron-barred windows, symbolical of hope, shedding its sweet influence on the spirit that is darkened by crime.

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XXVIII.

TRINIDAD.

TRINIDAD lies very near the coast of South America, separated from it by two straits, the Dragon's Mouth and the Serpent's Mouth. These form the entrance to the tranquil and transparent Gulf of Paria, which is seldom ruffled by tempest; and from this smooth expanse of 3000 square miles of water the magnificent island rises. But notwithstanding its serene aspect, you are reminded that it nourishes fire in its bosom, by traces of volcanic action which linger amidst the fairest parts of its scenery.

The Pitchlake tremblingly spreads its surface to the sun, at the distance of about thirty miles from Port of Spain, which is the capital of the island. Yet though Lake Brea contains pitch in many parts so solid that you can walk on it, and in others of a dull glutinous consistence, it must not be supposed that it is destitute of

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beauty. Its surface is rent by large chasms which become the beds of rivulets, and these are filled with mullets and fish of all kinds; and nature as if unwilling that this wonderful spot should be left unadorned, has given a fertilising property to the pitch which, mingling with the mould around its margin, causes the finest fruits and most luxuriant trees to cluster round its dark surface.

The approach to this lake is a gentle ascent through a dense wood, where streams of hardened pitch may be traced meandering over the uneven ground. The songs of birds fall pleasantly on the ear. Large white convolvuluses having wound their way to the summit of some gigantic tree, look down on you from their lofty eminence, and the beautiful Coney-flower vine holds with its numerous claspers some dark bough, gemming the leaves with its amethystine flowers. Butterflies sport in the green twilight, and amongst them the tiny Humming-bird is seen carefully inspecting some flowering shrub, clinging to the frail stems of its blossoms, and endeavouring to draw out, with its pointed beak, the insects that are hiding in the flower cells.

From this sequestered pathway you suddenly emerge into the sunlight that falls glowingly on

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the pitch, which, near the shore, is hard and cold; but as you approach the centre it becomes softer and softer, till you leave the impression of every step on its surface. The heat too increases; and as you advance, you sink far below the level of its borders. At last you perceive the pitch bubbling and boiling before you, and feel it is time to retreat. Yet even then, as if to cheer with its foliage what otherwise would be so desolate, groups of flowering shrubs spring from small islands of mould, and seem like the smile of God on the stricken spot.

The lake is more than a mile in circumference, and within the memory of man has never overflowed. Yet our acquaintance with the West Indies is comparatively of very modern date, and Nature even in this island bears a silent record of a fearful eruption, at some distant period, by the sheets of pitch which cover the country to a considerable extent, and seem by their petrified bubbles to have been suddenly arrested in their boiling flow by some mighty hand, like the waves of old on Gennesaret's lake. The pitch in some places has completely mingled with the sea.

Many Mango-trees grow not far from the lake, and with their white pyramidical flowers amongst the large leaves, they remind one of the English

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Horse-chestnut-tree. The mangoe is about the size of an apple, but of a more oblong form, and when ripe it is of a deep orange colour. It has a very large seed, somewhat resembling that of an apricot.

In Jamaica the best kind of this fruit has received the singular name of number eleven; but the Asiatic mangoes are far superior in flavour to any produced in the Western World.

Trinidad is perhaps, next to Jamaica, the most valuable of the British West India Islands. The soil is fertile, and a thousand streams water the land in every part; yet strange to say, a considerable portion of it remains not only uncultivated, but unexplored.

Some of the mountain-heights are covered by massive forests, and the fibrous underwood which Nature has for ages coiled around the trees, has no doubt shielded them from the woodman's axe. The lowland plains are in many parts so marshy as to render cultivation impracticable. A line of noble mountains traverses the island from north to east, and seems but a continuation of the chain on the opposite coast of Venezuela, from which perhaps, by some tremendous convulsion of Nature, Trinidad was torn off.

Along the northern coast, the mountains break

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into the most picturesque forms; some of them rising to the height of three thousand five hundred feet, are robed to their very summits with forests —and *such* forests! in some places dusky and impenetrable, yet as if by a kind of dark necessity shedding beauty on the land. If you penetrate them to any degree, the hooting of owls, the hissing of toads, the croaking of lizards, and the buzz and whirr of a thousand insects, at once impress you with the idea that you are intruding on a territory not yet under the dominion of man. Some insects are there which cannot live in the light, flowers which have sworn fealty to the shade, and would shrink and die if exposed to the sun.

The island is not generally damp; but during the wet season it is considered extremely unhealthy.

Port of Spain is one of the finest towns in the West Indies. The streets, which are built of stone, are wide and clean, and many of them are shaded by lofty trees. Between the houses, and beautifully separating them from each other, are clusters of the cocoa-nut palm; whilst the Oleander, the scarlet Cordia, and Indian creeper adorn the verandahs.

All around the town the Dagger-plant is seen,

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with its broad thick leaves of dark green ending with a sharp black spine. It resembles the aloe, but its flowers are more numerous. They rise up beautifully from the stern foliage, and hang down their snowy bells, which are delicately streaked with purple. The Indians used it in their warfare, sometimes to arm their shields, and sometimes as a helmet.

The wild Senna, too, is common on the mountain slopes. It scarcely deserves more than the name of a shrub. It has deep yellow flowers, which brighten its dark foliage.

The scenery of Trinidad is of an impressive character, made of the solemn mountain land, with hoary forests; and the nights are rich in the deep and golden splendour of tropical brilliancy. When the stars come forth and smile placidly on our own England, we think of them as they used to look down from those deep skies on night flowers, that unfolded only to their gaze, on leaves which trembled with delight at their appearance, in the far-off Island of Trinidad.

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XXIX.

ST. LUCIA.

ST. LUCIA is one of that line of islands which is called the Lesser Antilles, and runs across the entrance of the Gulf of Mexico. It strikingly possesses the wild and romantic features of its sister islands, and is remarkable for two extraordinary mountain cones, which, severed from the main land, stand in the beautiful bay of Souffriére, like veteran warriors guarding their country from the encroaching sea. At the base of these rocks cultivation has been busy, planting fruit-trees of many kinds, and spreading out luxuriant cane-fields as an emerald carpet over the sloping land.

The ascent of these rocks being very precipitous, they soon drop their vesture of green; and their summits, which are some two thousand feet above the level of the sea, present a rugged and barren appearance. Strange as it may appear, this rather heightens than diminishes their effect, and seems

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in keeping with the stern and peculiar character of the mountains.

And related to these ocean sentinels, though standing some little way inland, is the Piton des Canaries, which is a solitary cone, encircled by sombre forests and deep ravines.

These rocks all bear traces of volcanic origin, and may be regarded as children of the great sulphureous mountain, lying in the district to which it has given its name.

The large smouldering volcano is situated about three miles from the town of Souffriére; and though there is not even a tradition of any violent eruption, Nature has left an unmistakeable record in the broken and rugged aspect of the surrounding country, of earthquakes that rent, and fiery storms that once desolated the land.

Of those whose hearts failed them from fear, as they fled from the burning torrent, we know nothing; but the same bright stars studding the vault of heaven looked down on them in their anguish when the wailings of the night breeze were stifled by the loud cries of terror and despair.

This vast mountain is never wholly at rest. In some part or other a volcanic action is always at work, and water is eternally boiling at its summit.

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Its crater, which lies between two small and barren hills, is a thousand feet above the level of the sea. It is crested over with sulphur and cinders, in which are several bubbling cauldrons of the clearest water; but there are two or three larger fountains, more in character with the dark and rugged nature of the mountain. The black waters, in the tumult of their passion, rise to a considerable height, hissing and foaming amidst red and dusky smoke clouds and sulphureous steam.

The mould on the whole of this mountain-height seems but to cover a vast reservoir of boiling water; for you sensibly feel the heat of the earth as you walk over it, and if but a portion of it be removed, hot water comes bubbling forth. Yet this mountain, so combustible in its nature, always has a supply of the freshest water at its command, which it is supposed mysteriously to receive through some subterraneous passage from the Etaings or lakes, from which it is about half a mile distant.

In former days the mineral springs of the Soufrière were held in much estimation, and Louis XVI. in 1784, granted a sum of money for the purpose of erecting baths between the town and

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the mountains, which were for many years the resort of invalids from the neighbouring islands.

The climate of St. Lucia is very unhealthy—the wide savannas being traversed by many rivers which, overflowing during the rainy season, submerge a considerable portion of the lowlands; and this not only fertilizes the land, but impregnating the atmosphere with an unhealthy moisture, ripens, as it were, many thousand human beings for the reaper, Death.

For months the rain is incessant, and this loosening the earth on the mountain-sides, precipitates it in large masses into the vallies.

In the moist part of the country there are withs and reedy plants of the most beautiful kind. Creepers with tendrils of the most delicate loveliness climb to the heights of the loftiest forest-trees, and then descend again by a brilliant pathway of their own creation through foliage of so sombre and solemn an aspect, that it seems almost irreverent for flowers to have ventured there.

In some of the mountain-dells there are a profusion of Soap-berries; these are frequently used n England as bracelets or ornamental chains. They form black and glossy beads very much resembling jet. In the colour of its bark and

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the shape of its leaves the soap-berry tree, though small, closely resembles the English ash. It derives its name from the peculiar nature of the husk which encloses the berries. This has all the properties of soft soap, and is used to make lather by the creole washerwomen.

Castries is the capital of St. Lucia, and lies in marshy ground near the sea. The harbour is excellent, with sufficient depth of water to give anchorage to large vessels. The town is of a quadrangular form, and the population may be estimated at about five thousand. The streets are wide: at least in those parts bordering on the sea which lies at the west end of the little metropolis. They are well paved, and the houses are built of stone.

The upper part of Castries is chiefly occupied by the poor, and though there are neither wretched courts nor gloomy alleys, the houses are very small, built of wood, and rudely covered with shingles. But even here the wayward nature of tropical vegetation intrudes, placing two or three elegant cocoa-nut-trees at the side of some rude dwelling, which positively becomes picturesque under their influence, and mantling some unsightly heap of rubbish with the broad green leaf of the silken plantain: so that the sternest fea-

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tures of poverty are softened, if not altogether concealed, in the same way that human suffering is mellowed, if not hidden, by a smile.

Had the town been built on the mountain-slope above the unwholesome miasma of the swamps which surround it, it would have been infinitely more healthy. The square is large and ornamented by trees, and the Government House, tastefully and airily built, stands on a terrace of Morne Fortuné, commanding from that gentle eminence a prospect at all times magnificent, but invested at early morning with a solemnizing power. At that time the Bay spreads out before you with its glassy waters, unawakened by the sea-breeze; and the spires and eminences of the town glitter in the pure rays of the morning sunlight.

All the verdure on the giant twin-rocks glows in dew-drops, and thus adorned they greet the morning. Beyond them, a wide-spreading and undulating landscape extends, just tinted by purple and rose-hues, and softened by delicate and airy mist so transparent in its nature as to be more nearly related to brightness than gloom.

In the east a dark line of mountains stands grimly before the rising sun, as if with the presumptuous determination of shutting out his rays;

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but at the first glance he disenchants these sombre hills of their dark intention, and by creating on them a mysterious sympathy with his dazzling light, causes them to extend his influence as they become irradiated by the golden beaming.

Souffrière is an improving little town under the protection of its rock-guardians the Pitons. It has a very picturesque appearance from the sea, being built on a gentle ascent, and many of the houses standing in gardens are literally surrounded by flowers and fruit-trees; whilst you trace the direction of its streets, not by flat-roofed houses, but by graceful avenues of cocoa-nut-trees.

On the mountains, a little above the town, is the Chemin de la Croix, a most picturesque but precipitous pathway leading to the extreme heights of the mountains, which are clothed with verdure to their summits.

From the southern part of this town you can see the harbour of Castries and the iron barracks on Morne Fortuné. The walls of this building are of Ashen stone kept together by iron bars.

Indeed this dark metal is in close companionship with the whole edifice, for each story is encircled by an iron verandah, and an exterior circular staircase of the same material rises from

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the ground to the uppermost rooms of the dwelling.

The Etaings, or ponds, are on terraces about half way up this ascent. They are approached through a beautifully-shaded road, cut in many parts from the solid rock; and the gentlest kind of tropical scenery seems to have gathered around them. There is nothing imposing in the view, but a softness of feeling steals over you as you look on waving cane-fields of living green, whilst the country is studded with villas, and beyond this again, a wide space of land is given up to the cultivation of coffee which, under the protecting foliage of the plantain, seems to extend in endless profusion over the land.

The plantain-tree can scarcely be said to be known in England, for its growth is so diminutive in this country that it gives but a poor idea of its luxuriant tropical appearance. It is supposed to have been originally peculiar to Ethiopia; whilst its size seems to entitle it to a place amongst trees, its soft roots and pulpy stem claim for it a relationship with plants.

At the height of eight or nine feet from the earth, it spreads forth its large glossy leaves, which are about five feet long, by two and

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a half wide; and of so finely-wrought a texture, that the richest silk would look lustreless by their side. They are of a beautiful green, and depend from long footstalks. The middle rib of each leaf is very prominent, and being deeply grooved serves as a channel to convey the rain-water to the trunk of the tree, which, from its porous nature, very soon absorbs moisture. Its light purple flowers are of a thick texture. The fruit is soft, covered by a smooth yellow rind which is very hard and yet easily taken off, and the inside is of a deep gold colour. One branch of this tree may truly be called the fruitful bough, for on this all the plantains grow in large clusters, so that it sometimes weighs more than sixty pounds. When the fruit is perfectly ripe, this branch decays and falls to the ground, leaving behind it two or three young suckers in their earliest spring. In a very short time these yield another family of plantains and then pass away, so that this tree cultivates itself without any trouble to the agriculturist. It is, however, considered advisable to replant it occasionally on fresh soil, as it gradually decreases in strength, if altogether left to itself.

The Banana-tree, and there are several of these

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in the neighbourhood of the Etaings, claims relationship to the plantain, from which it differs but slightly in appearance. The stem is somewhat larger, and spotted with purple, yet the tree is altogether more delicately formed. The fruit is softer than that of the plantain: the one plucked from the tree melts in the mouth: the other when roasted, though of a pleasant flavour, partakes more of the nature of a vegetable, and when only half ripe, if well baked, becomes an excellent substitute for bread.

The Banana was a symbolical tree amongst the Egyptians, and the head of Osiris was adorned with its leaves. Ludolf supposes that these fruits were the mandrakes, for which Jacob's wives contended.

Bamboo-trees are a prominent feature in St. Lucia's mountain-scenery: along the banks of the river Dennery they cluster together, sometimes bending gracefully over its limpid waters; in other places, retreating a little from the stream, and clustering together in the most fantastic groups. The upper boughs of these trees are often so thickly interwoven as almost entirely to exclude the sun-rays, yet letting in a soft green light upon the earth which, devoid of all kind of

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vegetation, is strewed with myriads of the tiny leaves of this beautiful reed, all in their golden decay.

And St. Lucia, softened by distance, seems to look tenderly at you, as you sail from its shores.

The Pitons retain for some time their prominent character, till gradually enfolded in haze, they seem to become a part of the island from which they are so strangely separated; and when all the bolder features of this romantic spot have faded from the view, the undulating outline of the receding shore is beautiful still, and when every trace of land has departed from the waters, St. Lucia's towering heights and vast savannas, her smiling vallies and luxuriant forests, her golden sunsets and balmy breezes, are faithfully graven on memory's tablet which owns neither distance nor separation.

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XXX.

BARBADOES.

BEAUTIFULLY characteristic of tropical scenery is Barbadoes as you approach it from the ocean. Bridge Town, interspersed with Palm-trees, runs along the curve of Carlisle bay, and on the rising land beyond are scattered large country seats and villas, some partially embosomed in tamarind-trees, others shadowed by the white flowered Mahoe and purple logwood, while the stately mountain-cabbage rises like a great mind above its associates, distinguished from all the other palms by its green spiral summit, which stands with beautiful effect in the clear blue atmosphere. It is a most majestic tree, very much resembling the cocoa-nut in the arrangement of its branches, but differing from it in the straightness of its trunk, and in a certain stateliness of appearance which you at first sight recognise. Sometimes it reaches the height of a hundred and seventy feet, but the

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stem tapers as it rises, and the bark, as if to harmonize with the boughs, changes gradually in its ascent, from ash-colour to a beautiful sea-green, so that the stem towards its summit blends with, and grows indistinct amongst the branches which surround it. These spread out horizontally, with great regularity, and decrease in size towards the extremity, the highest boughs bending downwards, and waving like gigantic plumes at the bidding of the sea-breeze. But the summit of its trunk is not, as in other trees, lost amongst the branches, it ascends above them, a glossy green conical spire terminating in an acute point. In this is found the cabbage closely compressed in snow-white flakes, resembling in flavour the European cabbage, and when pickled it is frequently sent to England.

In Barbadoes it is chiefly cultivated as an ornamental tree, the negroes who have a strong perception of the beautiful, being always unwilling to destroy it, for the sake of its cabbage. When this island was first discovered, the tree stood there in its magnificence. No young shoots grow up around it, but the seeds are scattered by the birds promiscuously over the land. It is said that a musket-ball cannot penetrate the external part of the trunk towards the root, though the

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bark is not more than an inch thick. The Spaniards used it instead of thatch for their houses, so that it alike shielded them from the invaders and the hurricane. The wind rattles in its foliage, and when the golden evening sunlight plays with its branches, every narrow leaf seems converted into a flame.

When the English took possession of this island in 1728, in the name of the Earl of Carlisle, they chose for the site of their capital the spot where a simple Indian bridge over-arched a small creek in the bay, round which were the relics of some rude huts. In a very short time it assumed the aspect of a city of merchandise; but the inhabitants soon perceived that from the continual ingress of the tide, and the water, which, after rain, lay deep on the plains, noxious and unwholesome vapours ascended from the swampy earth. Yet Carlisle Bay spread out before them, where they could ship their goods without difficulty; and in the excitement of business, and the increasing desire of gain, which generally attends successful merchandise, they lost that healthful energy of mind which would have caused them to remove their capital to the other side, where the air was purer and the soil dryer.

Whenever this subject was breathed amongst

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the more thoughtful part of the community, one look at the wharfs stretching out to the harbour, one glance at the increasing shipping, threw to the winds every suggestion of practical wisdom; and in careless security of life, each went on adding house to house and field to field, whilst death was busy amongst his companions; and when he was himself laid low by fever in his prostration of strength and confusion of thought, he could scarcely even ask himself, "Whose shall these things be which I have provided?"

The town grew rapidly, as the palm-trees which fringed its shores; and when churches rose up amongst them, and the shops and storehouses were filled with goods, when the great town-hall looked down with an air of protection on the abodes under its shadows, and the government-house stood fearlessly out on the sea-shore, who could think of danger or of change? It has several times been overthrown by tempest, but it speedily rises from its ruins refreshed and improved in its appearance. The commercial part of this town is on the west side of the bridge, and, in opposition to our great metropolis, it is on the eastern side that fashion holds her court.

There is a fine statue of Lord Rodney in the square, and "Pilgrim," the governor's private

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residence, stands on the ascent beyond the town, beautifully embowered in trees. The market-place is picturesque and airy, and sometimes presents a lively scene. Groups of trees are scattered over it; mangoes, with their substantial shade, under which many negroes are listlessly collected, the spirit of indolence almost overcoming the desire of profit in their small speculations. Children of all ages and sizes, some with very little clothing, and others with none at all, gambol in the intense sunshine, as if childhood had of itself a natural affinity with light. Yet lassitude does not altogether gain the mastery. Wrinkled women and old men restlessly wander from place to place, and testify by strength of tone and vehemence of gesticulation, that they have long been worshippers at mammon's shrine. Some harmless flirtations strikingly expressive of negro character, light up the dusky face of the Creole damsel as we look on, as with dingy, but eloquent blushes on her cheeks, she looked at Sambo, whose white teeth were almost as expressive of happiness as a smile.

And such as these are enveloped in the extensive shade of an enormous Sand-box tree, the fruit of which suddenly explode with a noise like the report of a pistol, and scatter its seeds abroad,

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and then there are peals of laughter, and sundry negro exclamations, such as—"Hi! what for tree go frighten us? we neber do him no harm!" "My king! for true cupid got pistol instead of bow and arrow dis time!"

The stem of this tree is thickly covered with prickles, and these are of a pyramidical form curiously studded with red knobs. But its principal beauty is in the arrangement of its soft and glossy foliage, and the distribution of its shadows which create, in the midst of tropical sunshine, so soft and pensive a light, that the weary negro lying down under its canopy, in the poetry inherent in his character, has compared its shelter to the shadow of an angel's wing.

Several utensils of Indian workmanship have been found in the neighbourhood of Bridge Town, and hatchets made of the thick part of the conch shell.

When the Portuguese first discovered this island in their voyages from Brazil, it was literally without inhabitants, so that no record whatever is left of the character and habits of the natives. Whether they fled through fear, or were all swept away through some overwhelming hurricane, has never been discovered. How intense must have been the solitude! Those silent

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mountains, majestic woods, and vast savannas, and no hut of human kind, no trace of human life! Wild parrots abounded in the forest, and pigeons stood fearlessly in the immediate presence of man. The Barbadoes pink, a delicate vine, with a bright scarlet flower, whose habit it is to twine round trees, had passed the forest boundary, and, like an overflowing stream, trailed in its luxuriance over the lowland, and down to the margin of the sea, seeming, when there, half inclined to intrust its flowers to the keeping of the ocean. But the Portuguese, no longer an enterprising people, passed on, and amidst the vines and orange-bowers of their own country, lost all memory of this far-off land; and it was not till some years after that the English took possession of it.

For some time this Island was subject to proprietory government, the Earl of Carlisle being absolute monarch of the island; and though his power was sometimes disputed by the Earl of Marlborough and others, it was not till the commonwealth passed the famous Navigation Act, that a council and assembly were introduced into Barbadoes, the assembly being chosen by the freeholders of the Island. As we have before said, Barbadoes, as you approach it, wears a milder aspect

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than its sister islands; but as you draw nearer to its shores, you discern amidst much cultivation its precipitous character. Its surface is very irregular; the land near the sea being in some places low and marshy, in others rising perpendicularly from the borders of the ocean; and the summits of these cliffs are not unfrequently crowned with picturesque edifices. A military hospital stands on the brow of one, on another a rural prison frowns; the severity of its aspect being softened by the rich ivy-like vine which mantles its walls. On a third a protestant church stands, and the sunlight gleams on its windows, whilst its spire is whitely traced against the clear blue tropical sky. All the hilly parts of this island are subject to what we call land-slips of considerable extent. The soil falls from a great height, carrying whole fields of cane along with it. Entire rows of cocoa-nut trees have been known, it is said to descend to the plains below, altering in a few moments the aspect of the country.

Barbadoes has caves, and boiling springs and natural baths so sheltered by rocks, that the sun never gleams on their dark waters. At Dawlish, a fresh and salt water bath lie side by side, and these

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almost surrounded by cliffs have a dark and mysterious appearance. In calm weather they are unruffled even by a ripple, and are beautifully transparent. Water plantains flourish there, with their broad thick leaves, and send up their flower spikes above the surface.

If, however, a storm arise, the sea dashes into this recess, through the rocky apertures, with a thundering noise; the fresh and salt waters mingle in the commotion; the white foam spray gleams on the darkness, and the imprisoned winds grow strangely clamorous in their efforts to escape. On the sea shore where the cliffs are very rugged, is the Animal flower Cave, so called from a number of sea anemones, growing there in a recess which they have appropriated to themselves. The approach to this place is both difficult and dangerous. It lies under a beetling precipice, over which the sea foam dashes in thick and silvery spray. It is a large and irregular cavern, and its roof is beautifully hung with stalactites, from which clear fresh water is continually dripping. These animal flowers congregrate in that division of the cave, which is called the carpet room from the circumstance of the ground, all around them being covered with a beautiful kind of sea-moss, tinted

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with all the varying colours of the rainbow. In this spot when the waters that cover the rocky ground are calm and undisturbed, bright yellow flowers are seen, something in appearance like the English Marigold. They would not, however, attract much attention save from the golden beauty they shed over the dim place, were it not for the consciousness they manifest of the approach of a stranger. If you attempt to pluck them, they retire into the crevices of the rock, remaining in their places of concealment till you have withdrawn your hand. A few of these Zoophytes are found on the coral reefs; some of a light blue colour, and others of a pale brown, with their peculiar susceptibilities seem to be the connecting link between the animal and vegetable world. At some distance from the cave of which we have been speaking, is another called the Indian Castle, from the circumstance of an enormous idol having been found at what may be called its portal, the head alone weighing some sixty pounds.

In the district of St. Andrews there is a curious boiling spring, which nature has placed in one of her secret spots, having chosen for its situation the heart of a woody ravine. In dry weather when its waters are low, a gas escapes from it, which readily ignites and burns with a clear white

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light. During the damp season, this spring if touched with a lighted match is immediately covered with a blue flame which plays over its surface, and is with great difficulty extinguished. In a saucepan suspended over these flames, eggs are speedily boiled.

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XXXI.

BARBADOES (*continued*).

CARDINGTON College which does not possess of itself any architectural beauty, assumes nevertheless an air of grandeur from the influence of the scenery around it. It stands on the wide terrace of a hoary cliff, about two hundred feet from the sea. Some beautiful Mountain Cabbage trees wind their way from the distant road to a smooth emerald lawn in front of the college: and from their continual communion with the somewhat heavy looking building have succeeded in imparting to it somewhat of a venerable character. The situation is exceedingly retired, and the bright glances of the tropical sun on a broad sheet of water, which lies just beyond the shadow of this grey-walled edifice, gives to the most sombre part of this scenery, that peculiar sort of character which bears some resemblance to that expression of the human countenance, which though it re-

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tains its gravity, stands nevertheless on the borders of a smile.

When Barbadoes was under its proprietary domination, the district called Christ church belonged to a man of the name of Austin, from whom the large Bay in the neighbourhood received its name. Tradition leaves no bright record of his character; though persevering and industrious, rising early, and late taking rest, that he might add house to house, and acquiring that position amongst his fellow men, which is ever purchased by gold; it is said that he was troubled by no acute sensibilities, as to the justice of the means he employed to amass wealth, and that he extorted an overplus of labour from his negroes, by a cruelty unusual even in those iron times of slavery. He built a church on the mountain brow, whilst he was indulging in every species of profligacy and crime; and on this account the negroes invested its surrounding grave yard with supernatural horrors, discovering some omen of evil in the whispering of every leaf, and conjuring up spectres of the departed in the tremulous shadows of the Logwood tree, as they fell on the moonlit walls of the church; declaring gravely that they who ventured after night-fall into the dusky regions of those tombs, were immediately en-

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dowed with a prophetic instinct, as to what would be the eternal destiny of the living; and that they became by this terrible knowledge mysteriously separated from the human life surrounding them. Issuing from the graves, it is said strange sounds were heard, as if the world's unrest had penetrated even to those dark abodes; and there is a singular circumstance related, concerning a vault in the possession of Colonel Chase's family. When it was opened, the coffins which it had been supposed were lying side by side in all the repose of death, were found in great disorder; some being removed far from the place in which they had been left, and others inverted with their ends pointing to the west.

Many wild tales were scattered abroad on the subject, in which imagination held a prominent part. One negro positively declaring that he had seen the dim countenance of a veteran warrior, who had long been gathered to his fathers, looking on the light admitted to the tomb, with that strange kind of partial recognition we bestow on things which have for a long time been unfamiliar to us; and an old negro woman, who had been severely dealt with in her girlhood, by a tyrannical master, quietly asserted that he had stood up before her in the disarranged vault, whilst around

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the spectral bones, which in life would have guarded his heart, coiled a scourge all gory with blood. The coffins, at the desire of Col. Chase, were restored to their original positions, and the vault was again closed, the precaution having been taken to strew the floor with sand, so that the slightest trace of a footstep might, on again opening it, be discernible. All this was done without any feeling of superstition whatever, simply with the desire of discovering the intruder in the substantial form of flesh and blood.

Years passed on, and in 1820, Lord Combermere, who was residing in the neighbourhood, heard the tale of mystery which, though rendered improbable by the veil of credulity and superstition in which it was shrouded, had, nevertheless, about some parts of it, a vein of truth so discernible, that he applied to the rector to have the vault opened. To the surprise of every one, the coffins were again found ruthlessly scattered about the place, the largest being overturned, and another dragged out to the portal, so that it was with difficulty an entrance could be made.

From this strange circumstance, the negroes became more deeply immersed in superstition than ever, some declaring in all the gravity of truth, that on the troubled sand, they had dis-

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cerned the impression of the cloven foot, and when the vault was resigned and the coffins buried separately in the church-yard, a dread attached itself to the forsaken spot, which, to this hour, holds a sway over the minds of those negroes who approach it after sunset. All sorts of mysterious sounds are said to issue from the desolate place; lone bats range there at will, and from a cluster of trees in the vicinity, the screech-owl's hoot breaks on the heavy repose.

The negroes have many uncooth rhymings on the subject, and the following lines are as near as we can remember, to the original of one of their simple ballads:—

"O Massa, Massa, turn awhile,
Till the East grow red with day;
For Duppy watch, with cunning wile,
If Massa pass that way;
To weave in his doom a dingy thread,
To draw him down to the restless dead.

See how the bamboo trembles there,
How the orange pales with fear;
And Massa, hark on the dingy air
A dirge-like sound I hear;
Turn, Massa, turn, and pause at least
Till a crimson streak mark the shrouded East."

And to deliver a message on which life and death depended, the negro would not pass that way after night-fall.

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XXXII.

BARBADOES—HURRICANES.

BARBADOES is situated far out in the ocean, considerably to the east of the Lesser Antilles, which lie like a crescent on the waters. On this account it seems to receive the full force of the tempest, and sends it on mitigated to the other islands.

It is recorded, that in 1675, a tremendous hurricane swept from the face of its verdant earth, every house and building; destroyed whole forests in its fury, calling in the great sea to aid it in the work of desolation. We are told, that at its commencement, there was a strange sound in the air which filled the hearts of many with awe. It was neither loud nor startling, but distinct and low, rising like an audible whisper in the woods, and making itself heard in the remotest parts of the island; and when the pelting rain increased,

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and the thunder grew loud, it continued for some time a distinct and separate sound, and was lost only when the hurricane unloosed its winds, which, like a thousand fiends with yells and howls ranged over the island. A considerable portion of the shipping in the harbour was destroyed; death reaped an abundant harvest; and when the morning looked on the land, many a pleasant village was absolutely crumbled into ruins.

At the commencement of the eighteenth century, Barbadoes suffered from another severe tempest, which drew out that dimly remembered hurricane into the light again, and old men said that the loved ones they had lost in early youth through the destroying storm, seemed to stand before them again when the maddened blast rushed by. But it was not till 1780, that a terrible tempest which bore for many years, the emphatic name of "the Great Storm," laid waste the island. The day rose in blackness and darkness, amidst moaning winds and sweeping rains. The storm rapidly increased, and before mid-day, so terrific was its violence, that large trees were uprooted, and houses overthrown at a blast. The mountain torrents were dashed with such violence from their heights, that they opened in their

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descent wide chasms in the earth. Sea-birds were driven inland, whilst far out on the ocean, delicate singing-birds were seen, which had never before strayed from their own forest shadows. Large vessels were dashed against the coast, and shivered into a thousand pieces by the demon spirit of the storm, whilst their fragments were thrown in all directions on the whitely-foaming sea. As if darkness were in unison with such a scene of destruction, it seemed invested with more than its usual character of gloom, and when the hurricane had wrapped around it the dingy mantle of night, there was something more appalling than ever in its fury. It overthrew castles and forts, churches and public buildings. The old jail, with its sun-dried walls, iron-barred windows, and ponderous doors, was stricken down by one touch of the tempest. Many lives were lost, but eight hundred prisoners were thus fearfully liberated by a power which neither bolt nor fetter could restrain, and issued forth on a scene of ruin, some afterwards said, strongly in accordance with their own shattered hopes and desolated feelings.

At length, wearied with its violence, this fearful storm fell asleep at the dawn of day on the ruins it had made. The dead were literally strewn over the land, and of the few shattered

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houses left standing, truly it may be said, "There was none amongst them in which there was not one dead."

It seems at a first glance, as if mercy had been scared altogether from a scene like this, as if Divine wrath had sent this tempest in angry retribution; yet morally, as well as naturally, it was fraught with blessing. The minds of the upper classes of society had been enervated by the continual exercise of that peculiar kind of power which attaches itself to slavery, and this was continually developed by dispositions certainly not calculated to increase the happiness of master or slave. The master grew haughty and imperious; cruelty in many instances became his pastime; his elasticity of feeling was lost, and all his finer perceptions weakened by the daily exercise of a guilty sway; and on the slave a torpid discontent settled which benumbed his intellectual faculties, leaving him only the physical machinery for exertion, so that he tilled the land in a kind of monotonous endurance, remaining all the while as far as his higher sensibilities were concerned, not very far removed from the beasts that perish.

But as if with the raging of the storm an influence from God had penetrated into the deepest recesses of those awe-stricken human hearts,

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which had been so encrusted in selfishness, so stagnant in dissatisfaction, the spirit of kindliness sprang forth, and was beautifully exhibited by the sudden desire to bear one another's burdens.

The negroes forgot the fears which had opened so wide a chasm between them and their masters, who, in their turn, spanned the separation urged on by sorrow and alarm. It was found that this oppressed people who had been supposed to serve only under the influence of the lash, were prompted at this time of fear by a spirit the most unselfish, to succour those who had ruled them with an iron sway; that they evinced a presence of mind, and a courageous calmness, which had no doubt grown up under their life-long discipline, rescuing white children from danger and destruction, when their terrified parents were powerless to render them aid; and that in many instances they saved the lives of their oppressors, recompensed by a kindly word for hazarding their own existence in the attempt.

In almost every instance, we say almost, because there were a few dark exceptions, masters appreciated the goodness of their dependents; as if the winds had swept from their minds the rubbish of many unwholesome and fantastic ideas,

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the spirit of good-will took the place of uprooted prejudices, and it was discovered that the negro had a heart intelligent of sympathy; a suspicion passed through the minds of the proprietors, that after all, the service of love might be of a more healthful and elastic nature than the toil wrung from fear. Those new-born feelings of kindness, were in a measure impulsive, and ultimately yielded to that dangerous association with unbridled power which causes the heart of the slave-driver to be a very imperfect recipient of all the finer feelings of human nature; yet it was some time before even severity returned to its original cruelty, being softened by a recollection of the negro's generous kindness in the dark and stormy hour.

It is not to be supposed that a hurricane of so violent a nature could be confined to Barbadoes. It was felt in many of the West India Islands.

St. Lucia and Grenada were frightfully despoiled by its ravages; but with this work of destruction was blended good.

The Cane-ant, which overran Grenada, was completely extirpated; and though we may feel inclined to marvel how the demolition of a little insect could be a matter of any moment at all,

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when we consider that these destructive creatures spread over the whole vegetation of the island, devouring in their progress field after field of sugar-cane, we begin to comprehend how much blessing there was in the storm which removed them.

The sum of twenty thousand pounds had previously been voted by the legislature to any person who should discover the way of destroying them. Corrosive sublimate and other poisons failed to produce any sensible diminution of their numbers. If thousands were killed, the stream of new life issued forth stronger than ever from the bark of orange-trees, from the roots of canes. In some parts of the country the road for miles being carpeted by these vermin, became of a brown appearance, keeping the impression of a carriage-wheel but a moment on its surface, the indentations being speedily filled up by the surrounding multitude. Many trees they entirely stripped of their verdure; and in several of the islands crop after crop failed under this silent but irresistible destruction. Myriads were consumed by fire; for it was observed that red and smouldering wood had a peculiar attraction for them; but though heaps of these dead insects,

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in the shape of mole-hills, surrounded the burning blocks, their numbers never seemed to grow less.

It was left to the hurricane, with its fearful besom of destruction, to sweep them from the face of the earth; so that whilst we recal with humbling the fury of that tempest, we must remember the work of mercy of which it was the dark-winged minister.

In 1831 another fearful storm laid waste this beautiful island, more severe in its nature than any of those which had preceded it. This idea of its strength may in a measure arise from the circumstance of its belonging to our own times.

Those with whom we live in all the intimacy of friendship tell us, during the calm of our evening hours, of its work of destruction, and seem almost to bring before us the history of the storm on that fearful night. Others there are who keep in their hearts the eleventh of October as an anniversary sacred to mercy and to grief. It is no public fast day, but its commemoration is held in the stricken spirit, that withdrawing from the world communes more especially at that time with the Ruler of the tempest.

The weather had for some time been hot and sultry. The sea-breeze, in a gentler mood than

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usual, sprinkled the billows with foam for a short time, and then lazily died away. Distant thunder was heard in the mountains, and during the afternoon heavy clouds gathered round their summits; but there was nothing remarkable in all this, as these are the usual tokens of the approach of the rainy season.

The sunsets were bright and fiery, but even on the night of the tenth, there was nothing heralding the birth of a tempest. Some clouds were in the north, and a soft shower fell at twilight; but again all grew bright, and thousands of brilliant stars illuminated the heavens. As night advanced, squalls of wind and rain rapidly succeeded each other; the wind increased in violence; sleep became impossible; and all felt that a tempest of no common kind was sweeping over the island. Doors were burst open, large boughs were torn from the trees, and thrust in through open windows; masses of sand and dust were carried up into the air, and thrown violently down like hail on the roofs of the houses, and then all began to feel that it was the invasion of a hurricane. Mothers pressed their babes more closely to their bosoms; husbands clasped their wives in their arms, and the fear of the home circle being separated, grew into an agonising apprehension.

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The clatter of descending tiles, was for a moment lost in the crash of some heavily falling roof; and the wind as if it had been accumulating its strength for years, rushed like a mighty cataract over the land, with a roar far louder than that of thunder, destroying in its course every building in the island.

It was a fearful night. The walls of stern old dwellings were uprooted from their foundations by the giant tempest; and being broken into pieces were tossed about in the air, and then dashed furiously on the ground. Forest-covered hills literally grew bare, as the wild tornado continued; and in the midst of all this, family after family was driven out, by the fury of the hurricane, into the darkness of that awful night.

The husband was torn from his wife—children vainly cried for their parents—and the delicate maiden who had been fostered in all the luxurious repose of home, cowered under her unbound tresses which, with the violence of a scourge, were lacerating her bleeding shoulders.

Terrible sounds arose in that tumult. There were shrieks and wails, the howling of dogs, the crashing of falling houses; but all these were eventually lost in the yelling of the blast and the roaring of the infuriated sea. Each felt in his

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bewilderment, that agony and death were around him, but voice seemed paralyzed, and strength itself weakness under the pressure of the storm. The lightning, as if struggling with the winds, assumed the most fantastic forms, and exhibited a strange brilliancy of mingled red and green.

But, apart from all this, there was an extraordinary illumination of the atmosphere, which seemed literally converted into quivering flame, surpassing the lightning in brilliancy, yet mysteriously revealing instead of dissolving the darkness.

And now the storm became more formidable than ever, being armed with a thousand missiles of destruction in the fragments of the houses it had overthrown. For more than an hour, a blackness of darkness hung over the earth which was occasionally penetrated by meteors of terrible beauty.

Suddenly a large red globe of fire was observed to descend from the heavens; as it approached the earth, the rapidity of its motion increased, it assumed an elongated form, and changing all at once from red to a dazzling whiteness, it dashed itself on the sands, where, breaking into a thousand fragments as of sparkling diamonds, it immediately became extinct. After this, the wind,

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as if solemnized, all at once abated, and then the arrowy lightning was seen issuing from every part of the heavens. But the merciless tempest soon recovered from the momentary awe which had subdued it, bursting forth with greater fury than ever, and truly it may be said that the Angel of Death spread its wings on the destroying blast. Whole avenues of palm-trees were torn up from the ground, their stems being twisted round and round, and then broken into a thousand pieces. Cocoa-nuts were hurled through the air with the velocity of cannon-balls, many of them becoming messengers of death. Each cried unto each for help, and those who had never prayed before, lost the reckless defiance which had characterized them through life, and cried, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Many thousands perished amidst the ruins of the fallen dwellings—perished almost within the reach of aid which the intense darkness kept from them.

Towards morning, torrents of rain fell; and in the midst of these, the storm sank away. Anguish was brought to light that day, to which the devastated appearance of the land was a trifle. Some, dug out of the ruins, died in agony amidst their weeping friends; others were so lacerated that even affection could not recognise them.

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It was discovered that, during the night, the grim old gaol had liberated its prisoners, and been in its turn held captive by the earth, for its very walls were forced deep into the ground.

In spite of the utmost activity in burying the dead, fever overtook those who were thus engaged, so that death did not cease his work of destruction with the tempest.

But when all this excitement had subsided; when the tropical sunbeams sported with the mountain-shadows, as if there had been no desolation in the land: when each household fell back again into the accustomed regulations of every-day life, then it was that the ruin wrought by the hurricane was felt. There were seats left void and missing faces: there were bright smiles quenched, compared with which even the tropical sunlight grew dim; and for many years, some hearts there were that heard a dirge in the voice of the wind, as of a requiem, for those who had been destroyed by it.

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XXXIII.

BARBADOES—THE ALOE.

THE Aloe is cultivated in large quantities in the island of Barbadoes. It resembles in the thickness of its leaf the pinguin and the dagger-plant; and from the midst of its dark emerald leaves, the golden flower rises.

The powdered aloe of the chemist's shop is made from the congealed portion of the fluid which has been pressed from the leaves of this plant, and the juice itself is also used for medicinal purposes.

The aloe thrives best in the neighbourhood of the sea. It is one of those plants which flourish even on sterile soil; and it is customary in Barbadoes when the land is unfit for the cultivation of the sugar to use it for aloe beds. Although it is planted in soil which is not rich, some care is

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necessary in its cultivation. The ground is prepared for its reception, and the stones which are carefully picked from the mould, are placed as a wall round the field. Then the land is ploughed, and the young plants are set like cabbages, about five or six inches from each other, so that it is easy to uproot the weeds which gather round them. Mysteriously sustained during seasons of drought, by some invisible power, they retain a fresh green appearance, whilst nature around them is drooping from lack of moisture. They are generally planted between April and June, and it is about a year before they are ready for cutting.

A great many negroes are engaged in the aloe harvest. They set off with jars and tubs into the field, and cut the leaves as quickly as possible, that none of the juice may be wasted. There is much dexterity required in this, as the aloe plant is of a very tough nature; but they grasp a bunch of leaves in their hand, and, applying the knife to them, adroitly convey them to the tub where the juice is pressed from them, and they are then thrown over the land which they manure. After this, the juice is poured from the tubs into the jars, and before evening, several gallons are collected from the plantation.

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Aloe juice will keep for some time. It is generally boiled in the sugar-house after the cane crop is over. When of a proper consistency it is ladled out of the boiler into small vessels, and being mixed with a little lime-water, its preparation is considered complete.

The process to produce the powdered-aloes is very simple: the juice is put into bladders, which are left open at the top, and these being suspended in the sun, all the fluid exhales, leaving behind a kind of resinous matter which is easily ground into powder.

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XXXIV.

GRENADA.

When we look at the lovely island of Grenada, and feel that tyranny is crushed, and that the voice of freedom is now heard throughout the land, thought runs back over a period of 200 years, and pictures the island in its own native independence lying tranquilly on those sunny waters ere Du Parquet, the governor of Martinique, with a band of adventurers, landed on its peaceful shores. They were welcomed in a most friendly manner by the unsuspecting natives; and receiving knives, spoons, and ornaments of little value, they permitted the white man, without any opposition, to build forts in the country.

Gentle and childlike in their manners, they provided these invaders with cooling fruits as they laboured, listening to tales of the old world with eye and heart intent on the wondrous revelations; and if some of the graver and wiser amongst that

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innocent band felt a passing doubt of the sincerity of their visitors, it was indicated but by a half-suppressed sigh, or a momentary look of anxiety towards the little children who were playing amongst the palm-trees.

Till the fortifications were all completed all went on quietly, and then the guilty work of extermination abruptly commenced; and the French massacred the unresisting Caribs without mercy, without remorse. They destroyed their villages, uprooted their plantations, and ruthlessly pursued with the sword women in their loveliness, and babes in the purity, which should of itself have been their defence. Hundreds of Indians in their despair, each clinging to the other, that they might not be separated in death, threw themselves into the sea from the brow of a precipitous rock, which from this circumstance bears at the present day the name of "Leaper's Hill." There was no time for expostulation with the enemy, or for farewells amongst themselves. To escape from the inveteracy of pursuit was all that occupied the minds of this hunted people, and yet a dauntless resolution, a strength of will, and a love of liberty brightened up in their spirits during that fearful time. As band after band of these persecuted people reached the brow of the hill, wild shouts

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as of victory arose, then followed a fearful splash into the sounding waves, and the sea-breeze muttered a troubled and stormy requiem over their slumbers. There was a cruel recklessness in the pursuit, the memory of which left its dark track through a series of generations.

A beautiful young girl tall and graceful in appearance, just at that sweet epoch in life, when childhood begins to dissolve before the deeper feelings of womanhood, and yet infuses that graver time with a very large portion of its own careless vivacity, fell into the hands of the enemy; and becoming an object of dispute between two officers, each of whom claimed her as his prize; was released by a third, who wishing to put an end to the discussion, coolly shot the innocent young creature in the head, thus sending her undefiled into the presence of the Great Judge. Some legends of these cruelties became known to the negroes, who for so many years tilled that land in bondage. With these traditions of suffering, they held a sort of mysterious sympathy, and on the evening of a holiday it was no unusual thing to see groups of slaves gathered round the brow of "Leaper's Hill," in familiar talk, drawing out from the superstitions in which they had enveloped the spot, a tale of by-gone suffering, till the little

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children wept at sorrows, which had been sleeping for two hundred years.

The subjugation of the island was looked on more in the light of an adventure than anything else; for after the Indians were destroyed, Grenada became virtually the property of the governor of Martinique, who sold it to Count Corvillac for thirty thousand crowns. In all the West India islands, deep-stained crime has left its record; but the extermination of the Caribs from Grenada is marked by a peculiar unresistance on the part of the natives. As if conscious, that a strength had risen up against them, which from their very simplicity they were unable to resist, escape into the ocean depths was all they thought of. The billows had sad work to do, during that dreadful time, in extinguishing life, and hope, and love. It is no marvel then that as the evening breeze comes whispering from the mountains, the imaginative mind can hear in it a dirge for the Indians, for those who were so ruthlessly driven out of life.

Grenada is a beautiful island. As you look at it from the sea, its mountain ranges are softened and purpled by distance, whilst those in the foreground stand boldly out, clothed with forests, and wearing fantastically-shaped clouds around their summits. Sometimes even under tropical

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skies, a dull grey tint wraps them, and then all at once bright gleams of wavering sunshine mingle familiarly with the shadows without yielding to their influence, imparting to these mountain lands a character of beauty, so peculiar, that a description of them becomes difficult, we should say almost impossible. But Grenada's chief beauty is in her valleys; there is a repose in them, as if the spirit of loveliness had fallen asleep amidst their whispering trees. So peaceful and quiet are they, that every note of the little birds' summer morning song is distinctly heard.

Smiling hamlets are scattered here and there over the land, consisting it is true of no ivy clad cottages, gable-arched, but of negro huts, thatched with the palm, and lowly as the humblest things in the creation. These nevertheless borrow no small degree of elegance from the embroidery of nature, which with her brightest wild flowers covers unsightly walls, and mingles fragrance with the smoke cloud, eddying from the awkwardly constructed chimney. They are situated too in the midst of orchards, and such orchards where all kinds of fruit trees harmoniously blend, from the lofty cocoa-nut to the lovely but luscious vine; where the morning sunbeam cradles in the plaintain leaf, rocked caressingly by the land

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breeze to and fro, or suddenly piercing to the darkest recesses of the Mango's heavy foliage; making its character of gloom seem nothing but a jest.

There is no meadow land in these orchards. The ground is covered with the cocoa root and the yam; and with the green leafed calalue, a species of spinach, one of the principal ingredients in the far-famed vegetable soup, the pepper pot of the West Indies. There are clusters of the dark and glossy Orange tree, with its delicate bridal blossoms coyishly half concealed amidst the soft and transparent foliage. The Banana, the Guava, the delicate Pomegranate, the purple fruited Grenadilla congregrate round the simple dwelling. The Avocada pear tree with its green flowers and delicious fruit may be recognised there; and occasionally the Bread-fruit tree is seen rising to the height of about fifty feet, with its horizontal branches, and green heart-shaped fruit. It is very palatable when roasted, and is in taste something between bread and the chestnut. Although, in Tahiti and other of the south sea islands, this fruit appears to be one of the main articles of food; the negroes are so devoted to their yams and plantains, that the Bread-fruit, though ac-

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knowledged to be wholesome and good, has never become a familiar guest among them.

Some of the vallies of Grenada are most extensive, and are traversed by many small rivers, whilst large clusters of Bamboo trees bending over them, soften the intense tropical light ere it falls on their waters, infusing them sometimes with silvery green. Then bright sunbeams will suddenly penetrate the foliage, and scatter a thousand rainbows on earth, air, and water.

Grey cataracts come shivering and trembling down the age-worn pathway they have made from the mountains; the air is soft and balmy, and a deep blue sky over-arches all. There are several hot springs in Grenada; and near the centre of the island, at an elevation of about seventeen hundred feet above the sea, is a large circular fresh water lake, two and a half miles in circumference. A profusion of beautiful lilies grow round its margin; bending over it, as if to look at their mirrored loveliness in its transparent waters. All around are forest-clad mountains, which give to the solitary place a solemnity fraught with sadness. Lake Antoine, another smaller piece of water on the Eastern coast, is only forty-three feet above the sea, with which it has no com-

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munication whatever. Yet for the last few years it has been mysteriously increasing in size, and from volcanic substances having been found in it, and from the vast quantities of sulphur and lava which were violently thrown to its surface during the great eruption in St. Vincents in 1812, it is supposed to be the crater of an exhausted volcano. The beautiful mountains stand on the very borders of the capital, St. George, which even encroaches on their verdant slopes, placing picturesquely on the ascent, forts, flag-staffs, and a prettily built chapel.

On the other side of the town a small isthmus, forming a kind of natural pier, runs out into the sea. It is a lovely island, and now emancipated from bondage, broods like the spirit of peace on the restless ocean.

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XXXV.

MONTSERRAT.

By its very name, Montserrat reveals to us, that it is a land of mountains. It is characterized by bold and magnificent scenery. Dense forests envelope the stupendous heights, which do not, as in the other islands, form a connected chain, but are separated by enormous ravines, and these chasms are the cradles of luxuriant woods, and flowering shrubs, and gigantic ferns. Round sturdy old trees, delicate creepers are tangled, so that on the most sombre foliage fairy-like blossoms expand. Occasionally a sparkling rill comes merrily whispering down the precipitous sides of these vast ravines, its course being greenly marked by moss-covered fragments of rock, and if the morning breeze be awake, its spray is carried to a considerable distance, for the wind catches up the diamonds ere they fall, and scatters the stolen treasures far down on the path to the lowlands.

Amongst the early settlers of Montserrat were

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many Irish, so that the negroes, who are the most imitative creatures in the world, soon became familiar with the Irish dialect, and curiously intermixed it with their own African accent. It is said that a Connaught man landing at Montserrat, was accosted in Irish by a negro, from one of the first boats that hailed his vessel:—

"Thunder and turf," exclaimed Pat, "how long have you been here?"

"Three months," innocently replied Quashy.

"Three months! and so black already!" cried Pat in horrified amazement; "I'll not stay among ye;" and in a few hours the Irishman meeting with a homeward-bound vessel was on his way to the emerald isle.

There are steep and dangerous pathways among the mountains which conduct you through scenes of singular beauty. In Great Britain the loveliest spots, whilst retaining an aspect of solitude, are often those which are most frequented, but in these Atlantic Isles there is a sense of solitude conveyed to you by the majestic mountains for which it is difficult to find expression.

Mrs. Hemans when speaking of this western world, says:—

> "Awful it is for human heart to bear
> The might and burden of the solitude."

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Suddenly you emerge from the dense forest-shadows which have been the growth of ages, into an open savanna with the dew glistening like emeralds upon the soft turf. Awed by some invisible spirit, the woods seem to have been arrested in their progress. Thousands of wild-flowers nestle in the grass, many-hued butterflies sport in the sunny air, and morning lingers on these spots with her dews and freshness when day has advanced much further on her course in the lowlands.

From some of the heights nearly the whole island may be seen, and when the day is very clear, Guadaloupe, Nevis, and St. Kits, are easily discerned.

Plymouth is the capital, and though in many parts exhibiting an air of comfort and neatness, its public buildings are inferior to those in the other islands.

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XXXVI.

MARTINIQUE.

This island belongs to France, and although majestic mountain ranges occupy its centre, they are by no means so abrupt and precipitous as in Montserrat. Some of these mountains are evidently extinct volcanoes, and streams of hardened lava are traced through many parts of the island. At its northern extremity, the Montagne Pellée and the Piton du Corbet rise majestically above all the other mountains. There are large tracts of level land, covered with sugar-plantations, and these being watered by many rivulets, present, except on occasions of severe drought, a beautiful and verdant appearance. As the land near the coast becomes too sterile for the sugar-cane, its place is occupied by groves of the Cashaw-tree, or Holly-thorn; and these, from their peculiar and horizontal branches, have a curious effect

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when clustering together. They are generally of the same height, rising some fifteen or twenty feet, so that their summits spreading out uniformly for miles, have, when one looks down on them from an eminence, the appearance of level ground. The bark of this tree is rough, and of a dark brown colour, the branches are slender and the leaves very small. It is of so poisonous a nature, that if horses accidentally eat any of its leaves they are sure to die.

There is a strange circumstance connected with its flower. It has fine petals all of a golden hue, with the exception of one, which is not only marked with black but stained with red spots. This gave rise to a legend which has long been prevalent amongst the negroes, that the flowers assumed this singular appearance in consequence of a bough of the cashaw-tree having formed the Saviour's crown of thorns:—

'Gently, gently turn and see,
How each leaflet trembles;
Of this shivering, crime-stained tree,
Whose scarred bloom resembles,
The dim stream that slowly wound,
Crimson-stained and gory,
From the brow its thorns had crowned
Of the Lord of glory!

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And its boughs in their unrest
Have a ceaseless motion,
Like the ever-heaving breast,
Of the restless ocean;
Whilst a deadly poison dwells
Since that guilty hour;
On the thorn-sprays,—in the cells,
Of each golden flower!

Fort Royal is a well-built town, deriving its name from the dim-looking garrisons which frown over it.

Pleasant country seats are scattered on the sloping land around, with clusters of palm-trees between them, and the bay-berry-tree is there always green and beautiful. It is very upright, and has a pyramidical appearance, the branches below being wide and long, decreasing gradually and very regularly till they reach the summit.

St. Pierre runs along the western coast of the island, and is the largest town in the French West Indies.

La Trinité lies at the eastern end of Martinique, and is thickly populated. There is a degree of vivacity to be met with in this little town, a sprightliness of manner, and even gladsomeness of look amongst those engaged in business, which we question if English merchants could maintain with the cares of life around them.

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Josephine, the neglected wife of Napoleon, was a native of this island.

There is a singular reptile peculiar to Martinique, called the Lance-headed viper. Its head is triangular, and so greatly resembles a spear, that the French have called it Trigonocephalus. It is one of the most venomous serpents in the West Indies, and its bite has in many instances proved fatal. It coils itself in folds which rest one on another; and when making a spring, it throws the whole mass forward five or six feet. When it raises itself vertically, it attains the height of a man. Its body is covered with scales, and these assist it in climbing trees, at the summits of which it is often found in search of birds' nests. The viper has not the activity of other serpents, and when the weather is in the least cold, it will remain for days in a torpid state, among decayed leaves, or in holes. It has never yet ventured to appear in the towns, but frequents the corn-fields where it feeds on rats. It bites only in self-defence when attacked, and even then not immediately, for it must be worked up into a state of excitement before it has recourse to resistance of any kind, and a single blow will kill it. One has notice of its approach not only by a strong fetid smell, but by the cries of the birds around, whose

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chirrups as the viper draws nigh are suddenly changed into the wail of fear. The negroes generally consider its bite as fatal, but if the wound be immediately attended to, all dangerous consequences may be avoided.

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XXXVII.

NEVIS AND ST. CHRISTOPHER.

Nevis and St. Kitts stand like twin-sisters side by side on the Carribean Sea; yet nature seems to have dealt more gently with the one than the other, for whilst all the mountains of Nevis are clothed with umbrageous forests, St. Christopher seems to hold in its heart a sorrow which time has no power to soften or subdue.

Mount Misery, rising above the range of hills, as if determined to shew its black and rugged sides, is continually seen free from mist, whilst the lower mountains are veiled in clouds. It bends threateningly forward over a dark wide fissure in the earth, made no doubt long ago by some volcanic agency; and though nature smiles all around it, scattering flowers at its base, no creeping plant has ventured to pass over its harsh and rocky brow. It is the bolder sunbeams only which laugh in its face, giving by contrast, a

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more striking effect than ever to the grim stern aspect of the mountain. Yet, dismal as it looks, raising its sullen head more than three thousand seven hundred feet above the level of the sea, it has not power completely to subdue the spirit of loneliness whose path may be traced over a considerable portion of the island.

Negro villages are scattered through the lowlands, amidst clusters of rich mango trees, whilst stately avenues of tamarinds lead to some picturesque old country house, the forsaken residence of the wealthy planter of other days.

Groups of the dark leafed Mahoe-tree flourish luxuriantly by the sea-side, unfolding their golden blossoms to the waves. The purple lignum-vitæ, and the snowy wild coffee gleam brightly where the surrounding foliage is darkest; and the South Sea Rose attaining much more strength and perfection than when its dwelling place is in the neighbourhood of the towns, almost seems as if asserting its claim to be ranked among the trees.

Basse-terre is the capital, and contains about six thousand inhabitants.

Nevis always greets you with a smile; and though its scenery is not of so bold a nature as that of its sister island, yet there is a richness of verdure blended with its highland scenery, which

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though clouds may lower and storms arise, enable it to maintain no small degree of beauty.

Forests which have been the growth of years, give a venerable appearance to the distant mountains, and flowers are profusely strewn in the vallies.

The Nightingale pours its melody on the intense solitude, and the little green Sparrow lifts up its voice in a humbler song. A thousand beautiful reedy plants whisper and tremble at the river side. Calabash-trees cluster together with their large gourd-like fruit, from which the negro manufactures so many useful domestic vessels, and around their pale green flowers, the humming-bird delights to hover.

In many places cane-field after cane-field extends from the sea far up the mountain side; and in the midst of deep vallies, cheerful negro villages pleasantly enliven the solitude, giving the traveller no unfavourable idea of rural life in the tropics.

The hum of cheerful voices, the wild and untutored song, and the gladsome laugh of children, fall cheerily on the ear, mingled as they are with the cooing of wild doves, the murmur of some impetuous stream, and the loud bold song of the nightingales.

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To an European eye, the palm thatch of the cottages, the commonest of all common things, has a picturesque and striking appearance, and flowers which we cherish in hot-houses give their bloom in profusion to the abode of the humblest peasant.

Sometimes the yellow snake may be seen coiled up in the flowery hedges. It is not altogether yellow but striped with black, with which something of a purple hue seems to mingle. It is about ten feet long, and though its bite is really harmless, the negroes regard it with a very great degree of terror. This snake is a sad enemy to the poultry-yard, and raising itself on its tail, will often spring forward a distance of twenty yards and pounce on its prey.

Columbus is said to have given the name of Nevis to this island, from the mountains of Nievis in Spain, being reminded of the snow-clad heights of the Spanish hills, by the white mist-wreaths perpetually hanging around those tropical mountains. Charles Town the capital, is picturesquely situated immediately under the highlands, the streets in some parts running along the borders of the deep.

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XXXVIII.

ANTIGUA, ANGUILLA, AND ST. MARTIN'S.

THERE is nothing remarkable in the island of Antigua. Its wide range of lowlands is well cultivated.

The Shukerly mountains rise in the south to an elevation of sixteen hundred feet. It possesses all the usual features of tropical scenery:—rough and undulating rock land, glens of fertility and beauty, dense forests and flowering trees. But there are very few springs and brooks in the island, and though the heavy night dews do their utmost to invigorate the thirsty soil, the lack of moisture is observable in many a spot which becomes sterile under the influence of the scorching sunbeams.

On the north-west coast is picturesquely situated St. John the capital with its gray forts and white spires traced out clearly on the dark mountain-ranges. It contains 16,000 inhabitants, and

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acquires some degree of importance from being the residence of the Governor-General of the Leeward Islands.

There is a naval station on the south coast, called English Harbour.

A degree of repose pervades the scenery of this island which is most pleasing, and the whispering evening air wafts to the sea the fragrance of many flowers. Spots of beauty lie hidden amidst the mountains, and the wild-pine and the dagger-plant which treasure the rain-drops as gems, gleam brightly at the wayside. Sometimes over the mountain-paths the delicate Indian-creeper trails, throwing its small coral blossoms at your very feet; and from a mass of humble fragrant plants, the Maypole-aloe arises and stands up erect with its coronet of gold. Its stem is very straight and always green. It is of very rapid growth, generally attaining its full height, which is between thirty-five and forty feet, in three months.

The negroes assert that it blooms but once in a hundred years; but it must be difficult to ascertain this, although there are many, as far as we have observed, which have never borne a single blossom. It is a fact, that no sooner has this plant given birth to its golden flowers and feasted the bee and the fly from the honey dew with

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which they so richly abound, than it withers and falls. It is said that the candlesticks in Solomon's temple must have been formed on the model of this aloe; and when we look at its horizontal branches, all wreathed in golden flowers, we must own that there is a strong resemblance to the accounts given of this ancient handywork. Although cherished in our English hot-houses, it is very seldom lured into bloom.

A few summers ago some delicate blossoms appeared on one in the possession of a gentleman in Somersetshire. The gardener asked leave to show the plant to strangers during his master's short absence from home. The request was granted, and many cheerfully paid their shilling to look at the rare blossoms of this exotic. When the gentleman returned, he found his servant had made three hundred pounds by the exhibition, so that the aloe blossom had literally proved itself to him a golden flower.

In the higher mountains whole flocks of parrots flit by you, rustling and chattering as they pass through the air. They are of a smaller size than those we have tame in England, and generally of a dull green.

The mackaws, however, of which a few are sometimes seen, are bright in many colours, and

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their scarlet tails, expanding as they fly, attract immediate attention.

The cashew-bird, or mountain bullfinch, flies from bough to bough, with a low soft note whilst on the wing. It is called by many, the orange-bird, having, at a distance, the appearance of that fruit, as it nestles with its golden breast amidst the dark foliage.

Many beautiful convolvuluses become conspicuous at twilight, which had timidly shrunk from the ardent gaze of the sunbeams.

The shores are indented with bays, and in some parts the cane-fields reach almost to the sea.

Anguilla resembles Antigua, but is on a much smaller scale. As you approach, it has a singular appearance.

A wall of white cliff rises from the sea to the height of about forty feet, and then the country divested of the bolder mountain-scenery of the tropics, spreads out in gentle undulations. Yet there are romantic dells amidst its highland scenery, where wild flowers, forgetting their accustomed humility, climb the trees, sending down their blossoms in sprays over the sombre foliage, and where the forest, unmindful of its dignity, appears to be composed of gigantic flowers.

The Jalap, or four o'clock plant, blooms in the

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hedges, and very much resembles in form the English primrose. It seems too, to have imbibed something of the love of shade, for which that flower is noted, for it never unfolds its petals till the sun has lost its midday strength, and from this circumstance derives its name. The root when dried is used for the jalap-powder so generally known as a medicine in England.

Sometimes these little flowers are of a bright red, at other times they assume a golden colour; but, whatever may he their hues, they are always beautiful.

Occasionally an old country-house peeps out of its nook of leaves; and if the owl flits by dismally at night-fall, and bats make bold entry into the drawing-room, the merry sunbeams have a cheerful message for those large halls during the day, glittering on the worn frames of many a faded portrait, and giving a mellow and warm tinge to the still cold faces there.

Flat Island and St. Martin's are seen from Anguilla.

St. Martin's belongs to the French and Dutch, and is watered by numerous rivulets which invigorate the soil. The French occupy the most fertile portion of the island, but the Dutch turn their share of the land to a good account, from

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the large salt-ponds in their possession, which supply the neighbouring islands, and even some part of North America, with salt.

Philipsburgh and Marigot are the best road-steads in the island; and the climate, unless during a lengthened rainy season, is considered healthy.

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XXXIX.

TOBAGO.

TOBAGO, one of the British West India islands, is rugged and mountainous, and when viewed at a little distance from the sea appears like a mass of abrupt precipices mingling confusedly together. There are however vallies of great richness and fertility in this island.

Sparkling mountain-torrents bear with gentle melody their gift of freshness to the lowlands, where all the cultivation is carried on, and the forests having never yet bowed before the woodman's axe, wear all the grandeur of unfettered nature.

The deepest ravines are often filled up with rank and luxuriant vegetation, and the narrow mountain defiles having no free drainage, are extremely marshy, so that an unwholesome moisture arising from them impregnates the air and renders the island unhealthy.

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Some of the largest trees stand like veteran captives in chains, from the parasitical plants which have coiled around them. One of these creepers, called "Old Man's Beard," from its gray and shaggy appearance, though seemingly delicate, is of a most tenacious nature. It is used for stuffing cushions and mattresses, and is indeed a most useful weed. It is gathered in great quantities for this purpose, and is at first tied together loosely in large bundles, and then either sunk in water or buried under ground in a moist place until its bark decays. Then it is taken up and washed till the fibres are quite clear of the pulp, when in texture and appearance it is so like horse-hair, that it is difficult to distinguish the one from the other.

The Banana bird's hammock-like nest is beautifully made from this fibrous plant. It has the appearance of a delicately-woven purse, and often hangs suspended over a river by the slight, but strong cords, of this parasite, from the highest boughs of some fine old tree. The plumage of this bird is bright and beautiful, and as it swings to and fro in its luxurious nest, very soft and sweet is its cradle song. It derives its name from its love of the banana fruit.

In some parts of Tobago the heat is exceedingly

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oppressive, especially at Scarborough the capital, which lies under a lofty mountain.

Wild hogs are very common in the wooded parts of this island; they are often hunted down by dogs, and are so extremely fierce, that when wounded they will frequently turn round with great fury, and endeavour to attack their assailants, who are compelled to climb into a tree for safety; and the enraged animal thus foiled, commences a terrible warfare with the dogs, sometimes destroying them in great numbers, if they are not well used to the chase. At other times these hogs are taken in toils, but this mode of capture affords no sport to the huntsman. It was for a long time supposed that Tobago had given name to the narcotic plant, tobacco; but Humboldt has shown that there is not the slightest foundation for such an opinion—tobacco being a word of Mexican origin. This plant, however, with every other tropical production, may be found in Tobago.

Although first colonized by the Dutch, and ceded by them to the French, it has been in the possession of the English since 1793.

The rainy seasons are severe, but there is no record of any violent hurricane having reached this little island. Some petrified minerals are found there, and sea-shells are in the most inland parts.

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XL.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW, ST. EUSTATIUS, AND SABA.

St. Bartholomew is not more than thirty miles to the north of St. Kitts, and belongs to the Swedes. It is a small island, but extremely fertile. The graceful cocoa-nut tree fringes its shores; and as you approach it, the undulating light and shadow on the wooded mountains, form a beautiful back ground to its chief town Gustavia. As in Antigua, so in this island, there are no springs, and the rain water is carefully treasured. St. Bartholomew produces sugar, tobacco, cotton, and indigo, of which last commodity there were formerly many plantations in the island. For many years the indigo of the West Indies was considered superior to that brought from India, but at length this plant was so carefully cultivated by the British in Hindostan, that it became one of its most important objects of commerce; and the West India planter preferring the sugar-cane to

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the indigo plant, allowed himself to be altogether superseded in this article of traffic.

Columbus found Indigo growing wild in the new world; and the Aztecs, the Aborigines of Mexico seemed to have been perfectly aware of its properties as a dye. It was for a long time assiduously cultivated in the French West India Islands; and although it never attained the excellence of the Guatimala plant, it was thought very much superior to that grown in the British West Indies; indeed, the French government was so interested in its cultivation, that it sent out scientific men to suggest plans of improvement in its mode of cultivation. The indigo is a shrubby plant, with delicate soft leaves of an oval form. The flowers which are very small are crowded together, and are destitute of fragrance. These are succeeded by long pods, containing small yellow seeds. This plant may truly be called a child of the sun, for it cannot flourish in shady places. It is peculiarly subject to the depredations of insects, and caterpillars have been known to attack a plantation in such numbers as to destroy hundreds of plants in a few hours.

Much attention is necessary to keep the ground on which the indigo is planted free from weeds. It is generally cut down just as it begins to flower,

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and sometimes there are three or four crops in the year from the same ground. The dye is obtained from the leaves, stalk and flower, and after being pressed, strained, boiled, and undergoing a process of fermentation, the indigo being brought to a certain degree of consistency, is cut into squares and put into a cask, when a great deal of moisture exudes from them, and they emit a disagreeable odour. The cakes are then taken out and laid in a shady place, in the open air for several days, and being thus purified they are packed for exportation.

St. Bartholomew is surrounded by rocks and shoals, so that it is very difficult of access; but the harbour near which its capital stands is safe and commodious. Curacoa and St. Eustatius belong to the Dutch. The former lies off the northern coast of Venezuela. Wilhelmstead is its seat of government, and is one of the most neatly built towns in the West Indies. It runs along the curved shore of the harbour of Santa Anna, and the regular line of public buildings, the clean streets, and the commodious private houses remind the Dutch traveller of the larger towns in his father-land.

Curacoa is not a fertile island. Its soil is rocky, and there is a great deficiency of water; but the

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inhabitants are industrious, and contrive to cultivate tobacco, indigo, and sugar, in no inconsiderable quantities. Although vegetables are planted, and carefully attended to, the land is so unproductive, that the island does not yield a sufficiency to maintain the inhabitants.

Salt, obtained in great abundance from the marshes, is an article of traffic.

Curacoa is governed by a Stadtholder, assisted by a civil and military council.

The contraband trade formerly carried on in this island, has, since the independence of South America, almost ceased. Its shores are bold, and the general character of its scenery is of a sterner nature than that in the other West India islands.

St. Eustatius rises a dark rock out of the ocean, and from the depression in its centre, is evidently of volcanic origin. Over its neat little capital, frowning precipices lower; indeed the rocky coast of this island is almost inaccessible at every part save where its chief town stands.

The industry of the Dutch is everywhere observable, in the clean streets, in the neatly arranged negro grounds, and in the flourishing condition of every part of the land that will bear cultivation.

There are no springs in the island, but the

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rainy seasons are regular, and plantations of tobacco are seen ranging one above the other, extending in many parts to the very summit of the mountains. The paths through these tobacco fields are wild and romantic; sometimes you are overtaken at midday by sudden twilight from the dim shade of old forest trees which hang heavily over the way.

The bastard cedar extends its ponderous boughs, breathing out fragrance which reminds one of the English hawthorn.

Then the mahogany-tree weaves its net-work of shade; and though no silvery-footed water-falls come trippling down the mountain sides, large boughs are tangled in so flowery a net-work, that one is half inclined to fancy there must be a store of moisture in the very sunbeams which caress them. As you approach the heights, these parasitical plants seem to have gained the victory over the forest itself. By gentle perseverance they have so coiled and twined themselves round heavy branches, passing from tree to tree, with their rope-like and twisted fibres, that the way at length becomes impenetrable, and trees which have never seen the hatchet, fall from old age, like captives in chains.

The capital of this island carries on a con-

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siderable smuggling trade, and has six thousand inhabitants.

Saba is a fertile islet, only twelve miles in circuit. It is inhabited by a few Dutch, almost all of whom are shoe-makers, and they carry on a great deal of trade with the other West India islands.

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XLI.

ST. THOMAS.

St. Thomas belongs to the Danes, and has an excellent harbour, in the very centre of which stands a small fort.

The town, which is immediately to the west of the harbour, consists of a long street, in which the houses are built of brick, and are generally one story high.

All the spirit and energy of the place seem confined to Port France, its capital; but sugar is cultivated there, and the tropical fruits and vegetables thrive in its soil.

The cashew-tree, papaw, palma-christi, and trees and shrubs common in the other islands flourish there.

The cashew-tree grows to the height of twelve or sixteen feet; its fruit is agreeable, and makes a rough wine, but it is mostly prized for the nut

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or seed which grows on the outside. The shell of this nut contains a great deal of caustic oil with which the ladies of the sixteenth century anointed their faces, as although of an irritating nature, it removed their burns and freckles. The roasted cashew-nut is well known in England, and is generally eaten at dessert, for although very delicate in its natural state, it can only be freed from the acrimony of the oil by the process of fire.

The negro grounds are not cultivated with the care generally so conspicuous in the Dutch islands; yet yam, cocoa-nut, Indian kale, and cassava are in continual use.

Cassava was a staple article of food among the Indians, and it is still regarded as a very wholesome vegetable. It is a favourite with the negro on account of its easy culture. From the dried roots, meal is produced which is made into bread; and cassava cakes, so well known among the creoles, have found their way to the English tea-table. There are two kinds of cassava, the bitter and the sweet. The first of these is the best, and by far the most generally used. Although highly poisonous in its natural state; all the deleterious juice is, during its preparation carefully extracted from it, and its hurtful qualities are of so volatile a

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nature, that heat in a very short time dissipates them, so that if for a few hours, the root be exposed to the rays of a tropical sun—cattle may with safety feed on it.

In St. Thomas, as in the other West India islands, mirth and dissipation follow closely on the footsteps of care; and the brow that has bent thoughtfully over bales of merchandise, in the morning, relaxes at the festal party, and the dance is carried on unwearingly at the little capital, till morning blushes on the lingering stars.

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XLII.

THE REDONDA.

THE Redonda certainly cannot be classed among the British West India islands. It is a stern-looking rock, rising from the bosom of the deep—yet not devoid of its own peculiar beauty.

The red gold of sunset lingers round its dark brow, about which thousands of Boobies are continually whirling in dark eddies through the transparent air. Their eggs which somewhat resemble our plovers' eggs, have an excellent flavour, and are held in high repute in all the West India islands. It is a dull grey looking bird about the size of a gull; but they do not hold absolute sway over that desolate rock. There is evidently a Republic there, in which the Egg-bird, and the Noddy hold council. The only kind of vegetable to be seen there, is a stunted shrub, which the egg-gatherers call saffron wood, and use

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sometimes for tea. The Boobies with a degree of sense beyond that implied by their name, build their nests high in the rocks; whilst the Noddy chooses a lowly place for its home on the branches of the saffron wood, and is easily robbed. There is no annual building of nests among these birds; they are resorted to for a succession of years, and seem to descend by entail from generation to generation, acquiring perhaps that importance from age, which we give to an old and ivy-mantled dwelling. They are often repaired and sometimes so considerably enlarged, that the masses of closely interwoven twigs can be seen at a considerable distance.

The Noddy is remarkable for its love of ornamental work, and its nest is easily distinguished from the others, by the gleaming shells which adorn it. The Frigate Pelican is a great enemy of all these birds, especially the Boobies. It rushes on them, and striking them violently with its wings, takes the food from their mouths, and unceremoniously proceeds to eat it. The Booby never quits its nest in search of food without leaving sentinels there to preserve her little ones. Sometimes it is obliged to dive under water to escape from its persecutor; and then when almost

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exhausted, it raises its head above the waters to breathe, the warlike Pelican often attacks it with inconceivable fury.

The flying Sea Bat has its home in the holes of this rock. It is a strange looking creature, of a dull brownish colour, and covered with scales. It is sometimes thirteen or fourteen inches long, but its general length does not exceed seven inches. Its fins rise from behind its gills, and are almost as long as the Bat itself. Over its head and neck a horny substance spreads, and from each side of its mouth two long prickles project.

Flying fish are often seen in these clear blue seas; and if they did not very rapidly increase, the whole species would soon be extinct, for the birds of the air as well as the fish of the sea are their enemies; and if they descend into the water to escape the attacks of the one, they are sure to fall victims to the rapacity of the other.

Yet in spite of frowning rocks and beetling precipices; in spite of the havoc of hurricane, and the desolation wrought by earthquake; in spite of burning mountains and fiery torrents, the beauty, and grandeur, and glory of the West Indies, seem to carry up the soul to the very portals of heaven.

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When the great Creator, looking on all he had made, pronounced it to be very good, we remember that under his all comprehending glance, lay these beautiful islands of the West.

THE END.

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